...WHEN THE HEAP CREEPS 'THE SWAMP SHALL SHUDDER'...

A SKYWALD HORROR-MOOD PUBLICATION

PSYCHO

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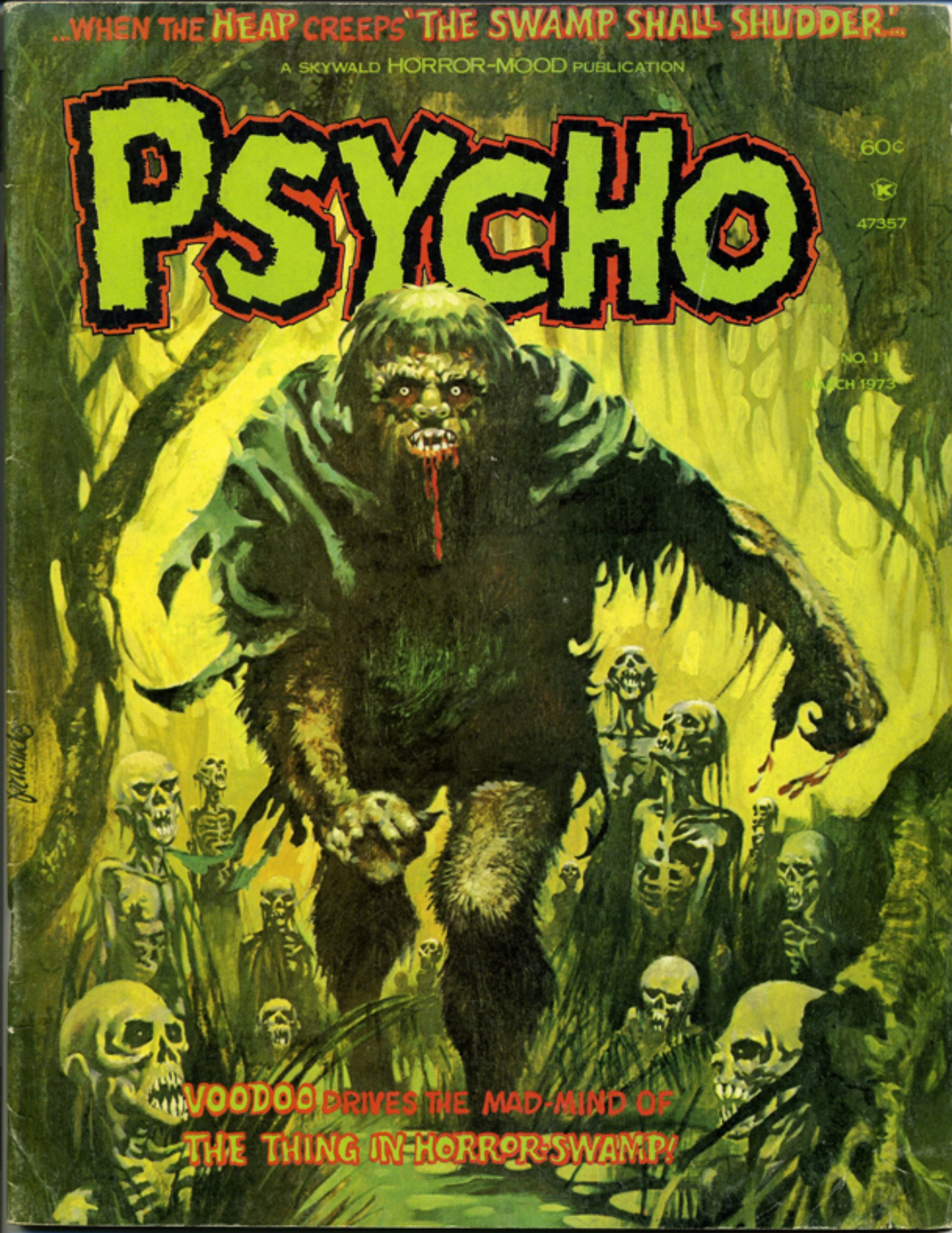

VOODOO DRIVES THE MAD-MIND OF THE THING IN HORROR-SWAMP!

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A BAG OF FLEAS
SAVE US!!
...AND IT DID DIE...
THE HEAP
...ROAST THEIR EVIL BONES...
BLACULA
HIT and RUN MISS and DIE!
--THE CORPSE
A BAG OF FLEAS
...MAKE MEPHISTO'S CHILD BURN...
DON'T DIE UP THERE STANLEY
...AND IT DID DIE...
DON'T DIE
. . . and so starts phase 2 . . .

...MEN SHUDDER AS THEY WALK BY THIS WAREHOUSE IN GREENWICH VILLAGE...WOMEN WILL NOT WALK DOWN THIS SIDE OF THE STREET... CHILDREN WILL NOT PLAY NEARBY IN THE ABANDONED ADJOINING TENEMENTS... THERE IS A PERPETUAL FOULNESS ABOUT THIS MACABRE WAREHOUSE THAT FRIGHTENS AND TURNS YOUR STOMACH OVER AND MAKES YOU MOVE ON BY... MAKES YOU WANT TO FORGET...
DELA ROSA
...THIS WAREHOUSE CONTAINS SEVERAL MAD SECRETS...IT IS A PLACE WHERE NOISES CRUSH THE AIR AROUND IT... IT IS A HEATHEN UNHOLY PLACE OF BUSINESS OF UNDESCRIBABLE ORIGIN...AND THE LOCALS MAKE MUCH CONJECTURE ABOUT THE SOUNDS AND THE SIGHTS AND THE SMELLS...
...SOME SAY THIS IS A PLACE WHERE 'IT' LIVES...'IT' BEING MANY AWKWARD THINGS -- MOSTLY MONSTROUS -- THESE PEOPLE WILL NEVER KNOW WHAT 'IT' IS...ALTHOUGH WE WILL SHORTLY...
...AND NOW -- WE START OUR TALE ...AND LOOK WITHIN THIS WAREHOUSE PLACE ... AND COME TO KNOW THE HORROR...
...and it whispered...
...and it wept...
...and it did shudder...
...AND IT DID DIE...
DOCTOR-- 'IT' IS HUNGRY!
...THEN... FEED 'IT'...
THERE IS NO MORE FOOD DOCTOR...
THEN -- GET SOME FOOD.
HEWETSON + DELA ROSA
TRASSH!

'IT' IS FED DOCTOR!
GOOD! - VERY GOOD...
...NOW -- HELP ME WITH THIS EXPERIMENT...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOCTOR?
I AM... INSOLATING A CERTAIN COMPOUND FROM 'ITS' FOOD WASTE... IT IS POSSIBLE, I THINK, IF I'M SUCCESSFUL -- TO ACHIEVE A DRUG THEREBY REMOVING THE NECESSITY FOR 'IT' TO EAT.'
OH, THAT IS VERY VERY GOOD DOCTOR... I WON'T HAVE TO KILL ANYMORE!
NO -- NOT IF I'M SUCCESSFUL...
...DADDY...
SEE WHAT 'IT' WANTS...
...IT' JUST WANTS TO TALK WITH YOU...
...OH... WELL ALRIGHT...
HELLO MY LITTLE ONE...
HELLO DADDY... TALK TO ME...
...YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN MY WORK TODAY, LITTLE ONE... YOU RECALL MY COMING INTO YOUR ROOM YESTERDAY FOR YOUR - AH - YOUR WASTE?
WASTE? YES DADDY.'
...WELL, I HAVE MADE EXPERIMENTS WITH IT... AND IT IS POSSIBLE THAT YOU WON'T HAVE TO EAT ANYTHING ANYMORE...
BUT I LIKE TO EAT, DADDY.
NOW YOU DO... BUT WHEN I'M FINISHED EXPERIMENTING YOU WON'T HAVE TO... AND YOU WON'T WANT TO EITHER...
HE IS VERY INTELLIGENT ISN'T HE DOCTOR?
YES -- I GAVE HIM CONSIDERABLE INTELLIGENCE WHEN I CREATED HIM... ...HE'S COMING ALONG NICELY...

DOCTOR -- WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO HELP ME LIKE YOU PROMISED...
...WHEN I HAVE TIME... I HAVE NO TIME NOW...
I'VE BEEN WITH YOU TEN YEARS... YOU DON'T HAVE TIME IN TEN YEARS TO KEEP YOUR PROMISE?
...IT ISN'T EASY...
YOU CREATED 'IT'... THAT WASN'T EASY... WHY CAN'T YOU HELP ME?
I HAVE NO TIME!
--CHANGING YOUR... UGH... FEATURES... IS VERY TIME CONSUMING...
YOU CARE FAR MORE FOR 'IT' THAN YOU DO FOR ME...
'IT' IS MY LIFE'S WORK. 'IT' IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ME!
...AND I'M NOT?
...I KNOW...
...'IT' CALLS YOU DADDY...
WELL I AM 'ITS' DADDY... I CREATED 'IT' AFTER ALL... 'IT' IS MY BRAINCHILD...
I WANT YOU TO CHANGE ME NOW!
WHY NOT?
...I CAN'T...
I JUST CAN'T... I DONT KNOW HOW!
AFTER TEN YEARS NOW YOU SUDDENLY TELL ME YOU CAN'T HELP ME...
...I'VE DEVOTED MYSELF TO YOU...
WHAT HAS THAT... THAT MONSTER IN THERE EVER DONE FOR YOU? NOTHING... WHILE I HAVE SERVED YOU FAITHFULLY...
I'M SORRY -- I CAN'T HELP YOU...
YOU MUST...
DAMMIT
AFTER TEN YEARS YOU MUST...
OH SHUT UP!
WHAT?!
I SAID... SHUT UP!
YOU DO DRIVEL ON AND ON... A THOUSAND TIMES WE'VE HAD THIS SAME CONVERSATION...
...AND A THOUSAND TIMES YOU'VE LIED TO ME... UNTIL TONIGHT!
...WHEN YOU ADMIT YOU CAN DO NOTHING FOR ME...
WELL THAT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH.
...PUT THAT AXE DOWN...
SSSSSSSSSLLLLLLIGGGGGE
WELL NOW... IF NOTHING ELSE... I CAN BE RICH... I CAN SELL 'IT' TO A ZOO OR SOME CIRCUS...
...AT LEAST... I CAN BE RICH...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH MY DADDY?
HE... IS DEAD!
MY DADDY? -- DEAD? DADDY-DEAD? DEAD?
NO! NO!
Aaaarrgh!!
NO!
WWAASSHH
DADDY DADDY
...AND IT WHISPERED...
...AND IT WEPT...
...AND IT SHUDDERED...
ah huh hu huh huh
hu hu
AH huh
hu
hu hu
...AND IT WILL DIE... WHEN THERE IS NO MORE FOOD... AND NO MORE TALK... AND NO LONGER ANY REASON -- FOR BEING... ALIVE...

. . . THE SCREAM SCREEN MOVIE REVIEW . . .

by Alan Hewetson

. . . this is **BLACULA** . . . he who embodies black-evil in the 1970's . . . the FIEND cast-off from another CENTURY . . . the fierce reaper-of-death who never wanted to be . . . whose TORMENT is that he TOO is a VICTIM . . . this is a film about a deadly BLOODSUCKER who DESPISES himself and FIGHTS his vampiric nature . . .

. . . **BLACULA** is **WILLIAM MARSHALL** . . . and so starts our review of the soul-brother of the world's OLDEST vampire . . . **DRACULA** . . . the HUMAN-BEAST who is . . .

BLACULA

WILLIAM MACAULAY as **DRACULA** single-handedly makes this an important film to see . . . he is viscious, evil — the FINEST **DRACULA** EVER . . .

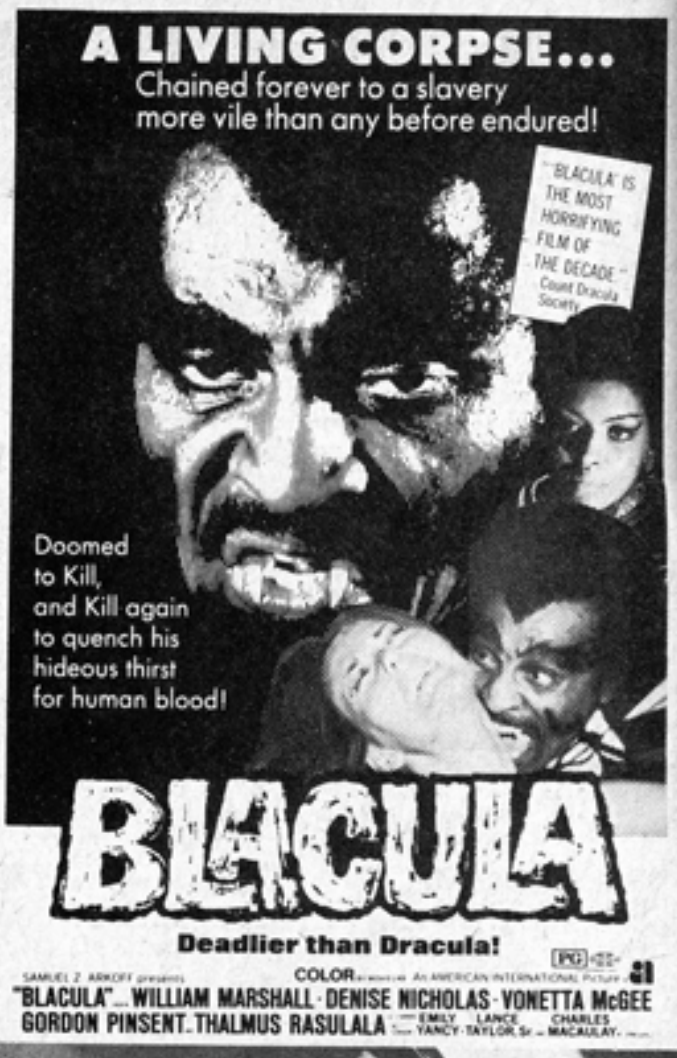
. . . WILLIAM MARSHALL is **BLACULA** . . . VONETTA McGEE is LUVA and TINA . . . playing a double role as **BLACULA'S** brides . . . Ms. McGee is a BEAUTIFUL woman . . .

There are elements in this film whfch are classical . . . specifically 2 scenes . . . 2 scenes alone qualify this film as an excellent film for the serious student of horror . . .

SCENE 1 — Charles Macaulay portrays the original 18th century **DRACULA** in an unusual caricature of the blood-fiend . . . Macaulay's performance is EXTRA-ordinary . . . he opens the production with a debate with **BLACULA** which slowly weaves and twists and turns till he obtains absolute physical and physic dominance over the African prince and his wife . . . pure hatred of humanity spews from his gleaming, bloodied mouth . . . utter noble indignation pours from his age-matted scarlet eyes . . . never has **DRACULA** been portrayed so dynamically as by Charles Macaulay . . . whose physical appearance is logical . . . whose delivery of essentially trite dialog is original and masterful . . .

. . . Macaulay ALONE makes this an important motion picture in the theater of horror . . .

SCENE 2 — female cabdriver Juanita Jones (KETTY LESTER) attacks a morgue attendant, Sam 'the man' (ELISHA COOK JR) in a powerful and dramatic example of slow-motion horror. One handed Sam is surprised while on the phone (as is the viewer) by the sudden onrush of the vampiress who, through slow-motion, hand-held camera work, charges with ferocious lunacy into the movie audience . . . it is a superb example of modern film photography . . . it is a brain-crushing scene of sheer fear . . . one we recommend you DO NOT MISS . . .


A LIVING CORPSE...
Chained forever to a slavery more vile than any before endured!
"BLACULA" IS THE MOST HORRIFYING FILM OF THE DECADE." Count Dracula Society
Doomed to Kill, and Kill again to quench his hideous thirst for human blood!
BLACULA
Deadlier than Dracula!
PG
SAMUEL Z. ARKOFF presents COLOR An AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL Picture
"BLACULA" ... WILLIAM MARSHALL · DENISE NICHOLAS · VONETTA McGEE
GORDON PINSENT · THALMUS RASULALA · EMILY YANCY · LANCE TAYLOR, Sr. · CHARLES MACAULAY

WILLIAM MARSHALL as **BLACULA** is excellently cast . . . his Shakespearean voice is cruel and sometimes pitifully frightening . . . he does a good job of turning an awful screenplay into an 'acceptable' story . . . everybody else in the film, in our opinion, is bad . . . but it isn't entirely their fault . . . for the film is essentially just another outrageous ploy to make money without having to work too long or too hard on a plot . . .

BLACULA demolishes anyone and anyTHING that stands in his path to POWER . . .

One of **BLACULA'S** victims violently attacks a would-be rescuer . . .

African princess Luva is the captive of two vampire slaves while husband **BLACULA** confronts **DRACULA** . . .

BLACULA defends his woman in the tunnels of a great American city by slaughtering ITS protectors . . .

. . . as his woman TRINA dies . . . **BLACULA'S** reason for 'living' is ended . . . he is a VICTIM, this **BLACULA;** his reasons for being are not from CHOICE . . . thus — his heart destroyed by the death of his woman . . . his last act on this earth is SUICIDE . . .

. . . it is a film we recommend because of the 2 scenes we've suggested . . .
. . . a SAMUEL ARKOFF presentation through AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL, directed by WILLIAM CRAIN, starring: WILLIAM MARSHALL, VONETTA McGEE, DENISE NICHOLAS, THALMUS RASULALA, GORDEN PINSENT and CHARLES MACAULAY, with excellent photography by JOHN STEVENS . . .

AS GREENISH SLIMES CLING TO DARK-DANK DUNGEON WALLS, SO DO GROTESQUE FACTS ADHERE TO THE DIETY OF SATAN!!! BAR NONE, THE STRANGEST, MOST MAGNA-HIDEOUS ACT IN HISTORY CLOAKED THE SHRIEK OF...
AMIDST A CROWD IN THE COBBLED ROYAL SQUARE OF JERSEY, ENGLAND... A WOMAN BREATHES THE FIRST OF SMOKE-FILLED AIR! THE PAINS CREEP THROUGH HER YOUTHFUL BODY, AND RISE TO PITIFUL GROANS THAT ESCAPE HER TWISTED LIPS! SHE IS IN LABOR... ABOUT TO BESTOW THE
...MAKE MEPHISTO'S CHILD BURN...
AAARRGGGHH!!!!
AAAGGHHH!!!
NOT NOW!! NOT NOW!!! STAY, LITTLE ONE!! LIE, CLOAKED IN SAFETY WITHIN YOUR MOTHER'S WOMB... THE WORLD OUTSIDE IS WICKED!!
AAARRRGGGHHH!!!
DIE, MAGGOT!! CREATURE OF HELLISH LUST
...BRIDE OF THE DAMNED!!!
LOOK!!!
THE CHILD COMES!!!...
...AND SO SHALL IT PERISH IN THE FLAMES WITH ITS' MOTHER!!!
HA HA HAAAA!!! DEATH TO THEM BOTH!!!
HA HA HA HA HA HA!
WITH WHAT LITTLE STRENGTH MUST HAVE REMAINED IN HER FIRE-EATEN LEGS, A MOTHER PUSHES HER CHILD TO SAFETY.....
YYYAAAIIIIIIIEEEEE!!!!
WHAT DEVIL'S FOLLY IS THIS??!
SHE HAS SAVED THE CHILD FROM THE FLAMES!!!
IT IS THE HEIR OF HELL...
...THE OFF-SPRING OF SATAN...
...KILL IT!!! KILL IT!!!!
WWaaaaaaa
WWaaaaaa Waahhh!!
...ONLY TO HAVE HER LOVE RE-CONDEMNED TO A FIERY DEATH!!!
WWWaaaaaaaaaaaa!!!!!
WWWRRRRNNNHHHHHH
DIE!!!!
PERISH WITH YOU MOTHER... SPAWN OF SATAN...
PRINCE OF HELL!!!!
DELA ROSA.

THE DAY STEAMS... THE NIGHT HAS BEEN A NIGHT OF UNCONSCIOUS HORROR FOR THIS BEAST-MACABRE WHO NOW STANDS STAGGERING IN THIS HOLLOW DOORWAY AS A ***MAN***...

...INSIDE IS AN OLD MAN, VERY DEAD, JUST DEPARTED; THE NIGHT BEFORE HE HAD PUSHED A SHOTGUN'S ***GUTS*** INTO THIS MAN ONLY SECONDS BEFORE HE TURNED INTO A ***HEAP***...

...THE ***HEAP*** STRUGGLED TO LIVE... BUT THE BODY OF ***ANY*** MAN-LET ALONE A ***HEAP*** ...IS ONLY ***SO*** STRONG ...AND SO HE COLLAPSED NEAR DEATH...

...THE OLD MAN MADE AN ATTEMPT TO SAVE THE ***HEAP'S LIFE*** BY AN EXTRAORDINARY OPERATION...ONE WHICH AMAZINGLY ***WORKED***... BUT WHICH LEFT THE OLD MAN EXHAUSTED, AND IN HIS ALREADY-WEAK, WOUNDED CIRCUMSTANCE, AT DEATH...*

*...THIS ALL HAPPENED IN *PSYCHO* # 10
-The Archaic Editors-

NOW IT IS ***MORNING***-- ON THE HILLS OF THIS MAD ISLAND JIM *ROBERTS* BURIES A MAN HE THOUGHT A FRIEND... STANDS BESIDE THE GRAVE ...MUTTERS WORDS WITHOUT MUCH MEANING...

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ISLAND A SHIP APPROACHES...ONE WE HAVE VERY LITTLE REASON TO INFER IS ***SANE***... FOR FRIGATES OF THIS DATE HAVE NOT BEEN KNOWN TO SAIL ANY WATERS OF THE WORLD FOR OVER A ***CENTURY***...

...AND THE MEN WHO NOW ROW TO SHORE HAVE ONLY A PHYSICAL RESEMBLANCE TO HUMANS... ...FOR THEY ARE FIENDS...OF A SORT... ...A SORT NEARLY BEYOND ***REASON***; FOR THEIR BEING IS DEFINED IN WORDS AKIN TO ***DEPRAVITY*** AND ***MADNESS*** AND ***LUNACY***... ...SURELY A GROUP OF FIENDS WORTHY OF STARTING OUR TALE OF...

THE HEAP

A SHIP OF FIENDS

CHAPTER 1

..NOW I'M LEFT WITH ONE MINOR PROBLEM...
HOW DO I GET OFF THIS ISLAND?
...DO I REALLY WANT TO THOUGH? THE OLD MAN LIVED HERE FOR AT LEAST 20 YEARS... HE DIDN'T SEEM TO HAVE ANY PROBLEMS... NOT EVEN LONELINESS... HE HAD ROBOT CREATIONS...ALMOST HUMAN COMPANIONS IN A MAD GROTESQUE SORT OF WAY...
BUT I HAVE NO SUCH COMPANIONS... COULD I LAST A SINGLE MONTH WITHOUT BECOMING MAD?
...GOOD LORD...
..AM I MAD ALREADY? THAT SHIP... SOMETHING OUT OF THE 18th CENTURY...MEN DRESSED LIKE PIRATES BURYING SOMETHING ON THE BEACH...
..I MUST BE MAD...
...BURY IT DEEP MATEES... DON'T WANT NO-BODY STUMBLIN' ON IT BY ACCIDENT...
...BUT I THOUGHT THIS PLACE WAS UNCHARTED...
...IT IS... I ONLY STUMBLED UPON IT MYSELF A FEW YEARS AGO BY ACCIDENT...
WE'RE NOT FAR OFF THE MAINLAND...'BOUT TEN MILES OFF LOUISIANA IN THE MEXICAN GULF... MAKES AN EXCELLENT DUMPING GROUND FOR OUR HIGH-SEAS BOOTY...
WHATTA SET-UP... EVERYTIME SOME PLEASURE CRUISER SPOTS THIS OLD FRIGATE WE GOT THEY PULL ALONGSIDE CAUSE THEY FIGURE THEY DISCOVERED THE FLYIN' DUTCHMAN OR SOMETHIN'... THEN WE CLIMB UP FROM BELOW DECK AND STOMP 'EM... STRIP THE SHIP JUST LIKE OUR ANCESTORS DID...
...JUST LIKE MY ANCESTOR DID... YOU ARE NOTHING BUT COMMON THIEVES I RECRUITED FROM THE STREETS OF NEW ORLEANS...
...I ALONE AM THE ANCESTOR OF THE MOST NOTORIOUS PIRATE OF THEM ALL... CAPTAIN BLACKJACK... WHOSE NAME I HAVE INHERITED ALONG WITH HIS LUST FOR PIRACY AND ADVENTURE...
...CAPTAIN... LOOK WHO WE FOUND CREEPIN' 'BOUT IN THE BUSHES UP ON THE HILL.
WELL-- WHUT WE GOT HERE?
WHO ARE YEW? ...HOW'D YEW GIT HE'AR?...
...THAT IS A LONG STORY CAPTAIN, AND ONE HARDLY WORTH REPEATING...
..THIS GUY IS A CREEP...
WHY'UNT YOU THROW HIM IN THE PIT TOO CAP'N?
..BURY HIM ALONG WITH THE BOOTY... HE AIN'T GONNA DO US NO GOOD...
...I GOTTA BETTER IDEA...
..LET HIM ROT UP THERE...

...THIS IS JIM ROBERTS... ...NOT A **HEAP**... NOT A MONSTER... JIM ROBERTS - A **MAN** - OF FLESH AND BONE... STRAPPED LIKE AN ASTONISHING PIECE OF CARVED OAK UPON THE BOW OF THE SHIP LIKE AN ARCHAIC MAIDENHEAD... THE FIENDS WHO WOULD DO THIS TO A MAN ARE PREPARING TO WEATHER AN ONCOMING STORM THAT WILL HIT THE FRIGATE... **PROVIDENCE**... ALREADY THE SKIES GROW BLUE-BLACK AND THE WATERS OF THE PLACID GULF BEGIN TO **CHURN**...

...I CAN ONLY AWAIT THE **NIGHT**...

...MY ONLY **SALVATION** FROM **DEFINITE DEATH** WHEN THE STORM HITS...

...NO QUESTION -- WHEN THIS OLD SHIP BEGINS TO LURCH AND BOUNCE ABOUT THIS **BOW** IS GONNA GO **UNDERWATER**... I'LL **DROWN**...

...I NEVER THOUGHT-- -GOD-I NEVER THOUGHT I'D PRAY TO TURN INTO THE **HEAP**... BUT I'M PRAYING **NOW**...

...PRAY THO HE MAY -- THE STORM IS WELL-IN... THE NIGHT HAS LONG TURNED... AND THE MAN STAYS STRAPPED TO THE BOW... THE **HEAP** DOES NOT APPEAR THIS NIGHT... AND THE **REASON** MAY WELL CAUSE THE *death* OF **JIM ROBERTS**...

I'M NOT TURNING INTO THE **HEAP** -- I SHOULD HAVE CHANGED **HOURS AGO**... CAN IT BE THAT I AM **CURED**? GOD - NOT **NOW** - THE FIRST TIME IN MY **LIFE** I NEED THE STRENGTH OF THE **HEAP** AND I MAY BE **CURED**... ...**BUT WHY**?

IT MUST HAVE BEEN THE **operation*** ...SOMEHOW IT HAD MAD EFFECTS... THAT NOISE ABOARD DECK... THE MEN RUNNING ABOUT...

GOOD LORD!

FIRE AT IT... FIRE!!

ALL HANDS ON DECK... ALL HANDS ON DECK...

*THE STORY OF THE HEAP'S OPERATION IS TOLD IN PSYCHO #10... -THE ARCHAIC EDITORS-

THE SQUID!*

...BUT THAT'S NOT **POSSIBLE**... I **KILLED** IT, OR, THE **HEAP** KILLED IT ...CAN IT BE **ANOTHER ONE**? IT STANDS TO REASON WHERE **ONE** EXISTED **OTHERS CAN TOO**...

...BUT HOW CAN I BATTLE **THIS ONE**? **HOW**

FIRE AT IT FOR GOD'S SAKE ...FIRE...

*IT WAS BATTLED IN *PSYCHO #7* -The archaic editors-

...TIED AND NOW TOTALLY HELPLESS, JIM ROBERTS CANNOT SAVE THIS SHIP AS HE DID THE **OTHER**... ...TIED AND USELESS, JIM ROBERTS IS NOW WORRIED FOR HIS **OWN** LIFE... FOR AS THE THING DESTROYS THOSE ON SHIP... THE STORM HEAVES AND TWISTS AND BEGINS TO DESTROY THE 'UNMANNED' SHIP ITSELF...

NEVER HAVE I FELT SO **USELESS** -- MEN DIE AROUND ME... MY OWN **LIFE** IS IN DANGER... AND I CAN DO **NOTHING**...

...HOURS PASS LIKE TERRIBLE SECONDS... THE THING SLIPS BACK TO ITS OCEAN... THE SHIP IS DEATH ITSELF... GUTTING THE DECKS ARE WOULD-BE-PIRATES WITH THROATS SUCKED OUT; LIMBLESS HEADLESS WOULD-BE MEN WITHOUT LIVES... ...THE THING HAS IGNORED THE NEAR-HIDDEN JIM ROBERTS BY THE **BOW**... HE IS NOW UNCONSCIOUS... BATTERED TO UNCONSCIOUSNESS NOT BY THE BEAST -- BUT BY THE ATLANTIC'S MURDEROUS **WAVES**...

...JIM ROBERTS DID NOT SEE THE MONSTER LEAVE... HE DID NOT SEE THE DEPRAVED STORM LEAVE WITH IT... ...THE NOW CALM GULF WATERS GUIDE THE SHIP ALMOST AIMLESSLY TO A MACABRE DESTINATION INLAND -- WHEREIN THE **HEAP** IS BORN ONCE AGAIN...

CHAPTER 2 of THE HEAP ...A WEREWOLF WITHIN...*

* IN ISSUE #9 OF OUR COMPANION MAGAZINE *NIGHTMARE*... WE LEFT A NOBLE *WEREWOLF* WITHIN *DARKKOS MANSION*, A SWAMPSIDE-RESORT SOMEWHERE WITHIN THE EMOTIONAL EVERGLADES SWAMP... WE *PROMISED* TO *RETURN*... TO THAT SCENE... AND WE HERE WITH FULLFIL OUR PROMISE
-THE ARCHAIC EDITORS-

...BID WELCOME THE MUDDY MORNING *HEAP*...

...WAKE UP *HEAP*...

...OH *GOD*... I'M THE *HEAP* AGAIN... BUT... WHERE *AM I*? IN SOME FETID FORSAKEN *SWAMP*... BUT HOW COULD THIS FRIGATE DRIFT SO FAR *INLAND*.? AND WHY AM I NOT *DEAD*.?

...QUESTIONS, FRIEND *HEAP*, THAT WE CANNOT ANSWER ANY EASIER THAN *YOU* CAN...

...I'M THE *OLD HEAP*... MY BODY IS BLOATED-- SWOLLEN-- EXACTLY LIKE I WAS WHEN I WAS... AH... *BORN*...
...AND IT IS *DAYLIGHT*-- HOW IS IT I AM THE *HEAP* IN *NORMAL DAYLIGHT*...
...THERE IS ONLY *ONE* EXPLANATION...

*...AN EXPLOSION THAT ROCKED THE PAGES OF *PSYCHO* #7
-The archaic editors-

...GOOD GOD...
...WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS A *MANSION* DOING IN THE MIDDLE OF *NOWHERE*?-- OR AM I NEARER CIVILIZATION THAN I THOUGHT?
...NO-- IT IS TOO *OLD*-- DESERTED-- DECREPID...

...THIS TORTURED HUMAN WITHIN HARDLY HAS TIME FOR QUESTIONS... FOR NOW AS HIS EVERY THOUGHT IS GEARED FOR A FIGHT HE HAS NO *TIME* FOR ANYMORE ENDLESS QUESTIONS...

...TWO TITANS BATTLE... ...OF VIRTUAL EQUAL STRENGTH THEY STUMBLE UNDER THE MIGHT OF THE *OTHER*...

...AND THE TITANS *TUMBLE*...
...STILL FIGHTING...

...ALTHOUGH NO LONGER POINTLESSLY--FOR NOW THEY *BATTLE* TO *ESCAPE* NOT EACH OTHER--BUT THE DREADED *QUICKSAND* INTO WHICH THEY NOW SINK...

...*SINK*...

...AND DISAPPEAR...

...DAYS AND NIGHT PASS IN THIS UGLY PLACE WITH *NO SIGN OF ANY LIFE*...
:..IS THE HEAP DEAD?...
...FOR THE BEAST THAT EMERGES ON THE NIGHT OF A FULL MOON DAYS LATER IS SOMEHOW *DIFFERENT*...

IT IS A *HEAP* WITH *DEAD EYES*... FOR *WITHIN HIM* LURKS A *WERE WOLF*... WITHIN HIM LIVES A THING WITH NO MIND--NO HEART-- NO *BRAIN*...

...THE *HEAP* THAT EMERGES FROM THAT PLACE IS A *HEAP* WITH A *WEREWOLF WITHIN*...

...WHO WILL SLAUGHTER *BLINDY*...

...KILL AND *MAIM*...

...THIS IS NOW A *HEAP* WHO IS A *LUNATIC*...
...AND WHEN NEXT WE MEET:

...THE WORLD SHALL SHUDDER...

...MISS IT NOT...

NESTLED IN THE PINE-CLAD MOUNTAINS OF CENTRAL SWEDEN, THE HAMLET OF MORAH PROSPERED! VILLAGERS HELD FEW WORRIES, UNTIL THOSE INFAMOUS DAYS OF 1669! A HIDEOUS YEAR THAT WITNESSED ONE OF THE LARGEST WITCH SCARES EVER TO STRIKE THE SCANDINAVIAN PENINSULA!! ---A GRIM BATTLE RAGED AGAINST THE FORCES OF HELL, AND THE LEGIONS OF THE DEVIL.... A SATANIST HUNT THAT RESULTED IN THE MAD CRY...
...ROAST THEIR EVIL BONES...
GERTRUDE SVENSEN, WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT CHILDREN THAT WERE MISSING FROM THE VILLAGE, CONFESSED THAT SHE HAD KIDNAPPED THEM FOR THE DEVIL'S USE!
MOTHEERRRRRRRRR!!!
FATHERRRRR!!!
PPPPLLLEEEEAAASSSSEEEEEEEEEEE
SAVE US!!!
IIIIIIIIIEEEEEEEEEEE
YYYAAAIIIIIIIEEEEEEEE
AAARRRRGGGGGHHHHH
FEDORY AND BORRELL
SHE CHARGED THAT SHE WAS NOT ALONE IN THIS SERVICE TO HER DEMONIC SIRE!! ---A LARGE NUMBER OF RESPECTED CITIZENS WERE LISTED AS HER COHORTS IN CRIME!!
IN ALL, 85 WITCHES WERE BURNED AT THE STAKE IN MORAH!! THEIR PLEADINGS WENT UNHEARD BY VILLAGERS WHO HAD ONCE BEEN THEIR FRIENDS!! AMONG THAT NUMBER, WERE 15 CHILDREN!!! AS THEIR BODIES WERE ENGULFED BY THE GROWING FLAMES.... AS THEIR PITIFUL SCREAMS SEARCHED THE AIRS FOR LOVED ONES... AS THE FIRES BELCHED THEIR ASHES TO THE HEAVENS.....
SATAN LAUGHED, IN LUST!!!!

THE ASCENT TO MANY A THRONE IS OFTEN RIDDLED AND UNDERLINED IN BLOOD----BUT, NONE ARE SO STRANGE OR HIDEOUS AS...

HER MAJESTY--THE CORPSE

THE ONCE BEAUTIFUL INEZ DE CASTRO SITS BEFORE HER SUBJECTS!! TWO YEARS BEFORE, SHE AND HER THREE CHILDREN WERE THE TARGET OF AN ASSASINS' PLOT... IT WAS AN ACT OF JEALOUSY AND INJUSTICE THAT DEEDED THE YOUNG INEZ TO THE REALM OF DEATH!! IT WAS A GRAVE WRONG, THAT HER HUSBAND DOM PEDRO, SON OF ALPHONSO THE 4TH, KING OF PORTUGAL, RIGHTED!

BEFORE HIS CORONATION, DOM PEDRO HAD HIS WIFE'S REMAIN EXHUMED FROM THE VAULT, AND DRESSED IN THE ROBES OF A QUEEN! EACH NOBLE, AS WAS THE CUSTOM AT THE TIME, HAD TO KNEEL BEFORE THE SKELETAL, STRETCHED-SKIN BEAUTY ON THE THRONE... AND TOUCH HIS LIPS TO THE HEM OF HER ROBES!!!

TO YOUR KNEES IN THE PRESENCE OF HER MAJESTY... YOUR QUEEN!!!

FEDORY+XIRINIUS

IN THE END, IT WOULD SEEM THAT INEZ DE CASTRO HAD HER LAST LAUGH ON THOSE WHO HAD SCORNED HER MARRIAGE, AND PLOTTED HER DEATH---- ONLY, NO LAUGHTER WAS HEARD... JUST THE CRACKING OF PARCH-MENT-LIKE SKIN, AS HER CORPSE TEETERED ON THE PLUSH THRONE OF PORTUGAL!!!

CHICAGO IN THE TWENTIES WAS NOT UNLIKE ANY OTHER AMERICAN CITY OF THE SAME DECADE! PROHIBITION REARED ITS SANCTIMONIOUS HEAD TO CONFRONT THE EVILS OF A LIQUOR-SODDEN POPULACE -- AND GANGSTERISM LOOMED EVEN MORE IMPOSING TO BATTLE PROHIBITION WITH BOOTLEG WHISKEY AND BATHTUB GIN, CHATTERING MACHINEGUNS AND RUTHLESS MASS DEATH. THE HORRORS OF MOB CRIME WERE MATCHED ONLY BY THE HORROR OF A WALKING CORPSE, RETURNED TO GHASTLY LIFE WHEN SYNDICATE HIT-MEN -- ASSASSINS -- FAILED TO HEED THE WARNING:
MOENCH + VILANOVA
HIT and RUN: MISS and DIE!

IT STARTED AT 2 AM ON A TUESDAY-EARLY-MORNING IN JULY OF 1926, AT A PHARMACEUTICAL SUPPLY WAREHOUSE ON THE WHARVES FLANKING THE STAGNANT CHICAGO RIVER...
THIS IS THE PLACE! THINK WE'D BE DOIN' ENOUGH BUSINESS WITH WHISKEY 'N GIN, THOUGH...
ACME PHARMACEUTICAL SUPPLIES
DOPE'S GONNA BE A BIG THING SOON... GONNA BE A THRIVING BUSINESS.
I WAS INSIDE, TRADIN' MY SLEEPY TIME FOR MONEY AND GETTING THE WORST END OF THE DEAL. THE GRAVEYARD SHIFT, FROM ONE TIL' NINE IN THE MORNING, AIN'T NO BED OF ROSES AND ONLY ONE HOUR OF THE LONG STRETCH HAD PASSED...
I WAS TIRED... AND TIRED OF FEELING SORRY FOR MYSELF. SO I FELL ASLEEP... NOTHIN' UNUSUAL... BESIDES, THE BOOK I'D BEEN READING WAS DULL...
IT WAS A SHORT NAP. SOMETHING WOKE ME UP--MAYBE IT WAS LIKE THAT ESP STUFF I'D BEEN READING ABOUT IN THAT BORING BOOK... OR MAYBE THE GUY WITH THE BLACKJACK HAD SQUEAKY SHOES...
HUH--!
IT WAS A SHORT NAP ALL RIGHT, BUT THE NEXT ONE MORE THAN MADE UP FOR IT...
WWWHAAAAPH

CHEMICAL
C'MON -- HE'LL BE OUT FOR HOURS. NOW WHAT WERE THE NAMES OF THOSE THINGS WE'RE SUPPOSED TO PICK UP?
I DUNNO... THOUGHT YOU KNEW. SOMETHIN' LIKE MORE FEEN, HAIR OH IND, COKE KANE OR KANE COKE, SOUNDED LIKE THAT...
WELL, WE'LL TAKE THIS HERE STUFF. SHOULD BE AS GOOD AS ANY OTHER. KARNO'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT IT IS ANYWAY -- WHEN HE ASKS US IF IT'S THE RIGHT STUFF WE'LL JUST SAY YEAH.
YEAH -- BESIDES, THE PURCHASER'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO FIND US OR KARNO BY THE TIME HE FINDS OUT THIS IS THE WRONG STUFF. MIGHT NOT EVEN BE ABLE TO LOOK FOR US AFTER HE TAKES THIS STUFF...
AND WE'LL ALREADY HAVE THE MONEY, SO IT DOESN'T MUCH MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO THE FREAKS WHO USE THIS STUFF.
BUT, MISTER KARNO, THE CREEP ONLY SAW US FOR A SECOND...
WHICH IS PLENTY OF TIME TO ETCH YOUR UGLY MUG ON HIS MEMORY YOU IDIOT! AND IF HE FINGERS YOU TWO, I'M NOT FAR BEHIND IN THE RACE TO THE LOCK-UP TANK!
AND IN CASE YOU TWO BABBOONS DON'T KNOW IT YET: IN THIS BUSINESS WE LEAVE NO EVIDENCE BEHIND -- AND EVIDENCE INCLUDES THE MEMORY OF A BLACKJACKED WATCHMAN! NOW YOU GIT YOUR CRAWLY HIDES BACK THERE AND MANUFACTURE A CORPSE -- HIT HIM AND HIT HIM GOOD!

I CAME TO WITH MY SKULL FEELING LIKE BRITTLE EGGSHELL AND THE MOOSHY BRAIN INSIDE LIKE A YOLK SLOSHING AROUND, REAL LOOSE. IT TOOK ME A WHILE TO EVEN REALIZE I WAS AWAKE, AND LONGER THAN THAT TO NOTICE I WAS IN A CAR...

BY THE TIME I REALIZED I WAS IN TROUBLE, THE CAR HAD PULLED UP TO AN CRUMBY BUILDING TUCKED AWAY IN THE RUN-DOWN SECTION OF THE NEAR-NORTH SIDE...

LAST STOP; ALL OUT. RIDE'S OVER, AND WE'VE GOT A **SURPRISE** FOR YOU...

THE MAN WITH WHOM I APPARENTLY HAD AN APPOINTMENT DIDN'T SEEM TOO GLAD TO SEE ME...

I SHOULD'VE KNOWN-- I SHOULD'VE **KNOWN!** YOU TWO GOONS ARE STUPID, YOU KNOW THAT? REALLY **STUPID**-- THEY HAVEN'T **INVENTED** THE **WORDS** TO DEAL WITH YOUR STUPIDITY YET! YOU'RE **CLASSICS** OF **STUPIDITY!** WHAT STUPID **REASON** DO YOU HAVE FOR BRINGING THIS GUY **HERE?!**

W-WE THOUGHT YOU'D WANTA BE IN ON IT... THE RITUAL, YOU KNOW. YOU HAVEN'T MISSED ONE YET.

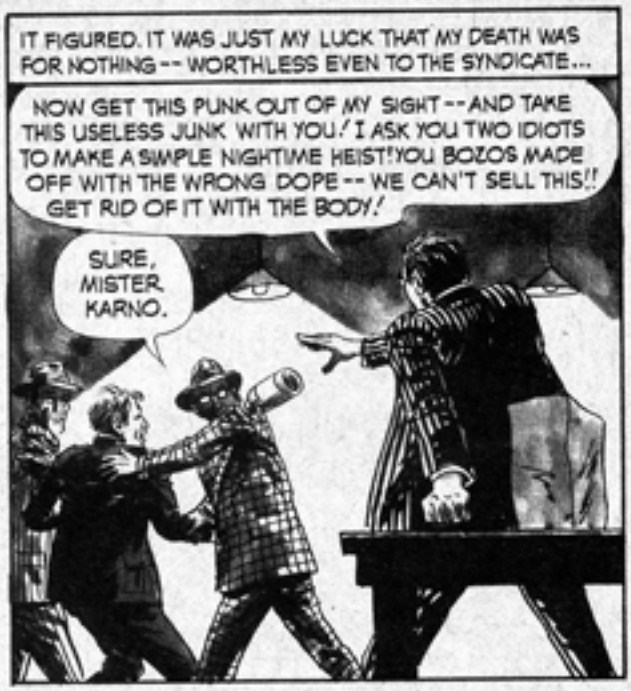
THERE HASN'T **BEEN** ONE AS INSIGNIFICANT AS THIS YET. I ONLY ATTEND **IMPORTANT** HITS-- THIS DOLLAR-AN-HOUR NIGHT-JOCK HASN'T DONE ANYTHING TO ME. KNOCKING HIM OFF'S ONLY A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE -- AND IT **FIGURES** THAT YOU TWO IDIOTS COULDN'T EVEN HANDLE THAT! GET RID OF HIS BODY... THE **USUAL** WAY.

COME ON, PAL-- YOU'RE GOING FOR A SWIM... IN A STARCHED BATHING SUIT.

I GUESS I STRUGGLED TO STALL FOR TIME, ALTHOUGH IT DIDN'T DO ME ANY GOOD...

NICE SET-UP YOU GOT HERE, MISTER KARNO. MUST BE A LOT OF LIQUOR IN THOSE BIG VATS. HATE TO SEE THIS PLACE CLOSED-DOWN ON ACCOUNT OF ME SUDDENLY SCREAMING MY LUNGS OUT...

FAT CHANCE, PUNK-- THIS PLACE IS SOUNDPROOF. CAN'T LET THE SOUNDS OF OUR DESTILLERY EQUIPMENT LEAK OUT TO NOISE UP THE NEIGHBORHOOD! THIS PLACE IS **AIRTIGHT** -- ONCE OUTSIDE THE DOOR YOU CAN'T SMELL EVEN **ONE PROOF** OF THE 180 WE BOTTLE HERE.


IT FIGURED. IT WAS JUST MY LUCK THAT MY DEATH WAS FOR NOTHING -- WORTHLESS EVEN TO THE SYNDICATE...
NOW GET THIS PUNK OUT OF MY SIGHT -- AND TAKE THIS USELESS JUNK WITH YOU! I ASK YOU TWO IDIOTS TO MAKE A SIMPLE NIGHTTIME HEIST! YOU BOZOS MADE OFF WITH THE WRONG DOPE -- WE CAN'T SELL THIS!! GET RID OF IT WITH THE BODY!
SURE, MISTER KARNO.

IT WAS PROBABLY THE MOST CREATIVE THING THEY'D EVER DONE... AND ALSO THE BEGINNING OF THEIR END, THOUGH I DIDN'T YET KNOW IT...
WE JUST MIX THE STUFF INTO THE CEMENT WHILE IT'S STILL LIQUID, AND THE WHOLE NESS HARDENS...

BESIDES BEING THE LAST TWO HOURS I'D EVER SPEND, IT WAS ALSO THE LONGEST TWO. STANDING UP ALL THAT TIME WASN'T BOTHERING ME; IT WAS THE PROSPECT OF STANDING ON THE RIVER FLOOR FOR THE REST OF ETERNITY THAT HAD ME WORRIED.

KARNO WAS RIGHT ABOUT THEM BEING STUPID, BUT HOW COULD THEY BOTCH A JOB THEY'D PROBABLY PERFORMED A DOZEN TIMES AND COULD NOW DO IN THEIR SLEEP...?
KARNO'S EVEN SMARTER THAN WE THOUGHT. HURRY UP WITH THAT CEMENT -- IT TAKES TIME TO DRY AND I WANNA SNOOZE.
YOU JUST TIE HIS HANDS REAL GOOD. I'VE GOT AN IDEA FOR GETTING RID OF THAT STUFF WE LIFTED FROM THE WAREHOUSE -- REAL CONVENIENT, TWO BIRDS WITH ONE SINK...

... AROUND OUR LITTLE WHIZ-KID WATCHMAN'S FEET!

I COULDN'T BELIEVE THE ABSOLUTE HORROR OF THE SITUATION -- THE HELPLESSNESS AND HOPELESSNESS OF TIED HANDS AND CEMENTED FEET, THE RUSH OF THE RIVER'S IMPLACABLE SURFACE AS I WAS WHEELED OFF THE PIER, THE THROAT-CHOKED PANIC AND THE IRREPRESSIBLE SQUEEZE OF CLAUSTROPHOBIA...

'SO LONG, FISH-BAIT. DON'T POLLUTE THE WATER TOO MUCH.'

KA-PLOOOSHHH!

I REMEMBR IDIOTICALLY FEELING *HOW* COLD THE WATER WAS... IT WAS LIKE BEING ***STUFFED*** WITH SOMETHING, STUFFED UNTIL IT CAME OUT *MY* ***NOSE,*** BURNING LIKE ***FIRE*** IN THE ***COLD WATERS,*** PIERCING ***AGONY*** INHABITING *MY* ***CHEST,*** SWELLING AND BILLING UNTIL IT ***BURST...***

...AND UNTIL I ***DIED,*** A GURGLING ***SHRIEK OF DESPERATION*** DROWNED AND ***MUFFLED*** IN A LAST TRICKLE OF ***AIR BUBBLES...***

MY CORPSE MUST HAVE SWAYED AND BOBBED LIKE A CHILD'S BASE-WEIGHTED ROLY-POLY ***TOY*** -- BUT IF ***ANYTHING*** I WAS A CHILD'S ***NIGHTMARE,*** MY CARCASS BEGINNING TO ***DETERIORATE,*** UNDER THE CORROSIVE EFFECTS OF THE SILT-SLUDGED WATER, ***BLOATED*** TO ***HIDEOUS PROPORTIONS...***

THANK PROVIDENCE I COULDN'T FEEL THE RAVAGES OF THOSE SHARP ***TEETH*** AS THEY FED UPON MY WATER-LOGGED CADAVER, ***NIBBLING*** AND ***SNATCHING,*** ***GULPING*** AND ***RENDING*** MY EVEN *MORE* ***TAINTED*** AND ***DISINTEGRATED FLESH...***

THEN I ***AWOKE...*** TO THE CONSUMMATE ***REVULSION*** OF INHABITING THIS GRISLY ***HUSK*** OF MAGGOT-RIDDEN ***PUTRESCENCE!*** I WAS ***FILLED*** WITH ***WATER...*** AND I WAS ***FILLED*** WITH ***LIFE,*** A PERVERTED, CRUEL LIFE OF PERPETUAL ***DEATH...***

I WAS AWARE OF A CLOUD OF **BUBBLES** RISING FROM THE CEMENT IN WHICH I WAS ROOTED LIKE A **DEAD TREE.** PERHAPS THE STOLEN PHARMACEUTICAL SUBSTANCE WHICH HAD BEEN **MIXED** WITH THE **LIQUID CEMENT** HAD **REACTED** AND UNITED WITH THAT CEMENT TO FORM SOME 'WEIRD' COMPOUND...

...AND PERHAPS THAT HERETOFORE UNKNOWN COMPOUND HAD PERMEATED THE PORES OF MY FEET AND ANKLES AND HAD **REJUVENATED ME,** HAD CHARGED ME WITH A **VILE ANIMATION.** IT DIDN'T **MATTER**--I WAS **ALIVE,** AND I'D FIND OUT IF I WAS IN **HELL.** I BURST THE ROPES AROUND MY ROTTEN WRISTS **EASILY...**

BUT I WAS STILL HELD FAST BY THE CEMENT. I BENT AT THE WAIST INTO THE FIZZ OF BUBBLES EMANATING FROM ROCK AMBER AND...

...**AND HACKED WITH MY TEETH AT MY ANKLE ABOVE THE CEMENT SURFACE...**

...UNTIL IT WAS **FREE** AND I COULD DEVOTE MY ATTENTION TO THE **OTHER,** STILL-EMBEDDED LEG...

MY BLOOD HAD LONG SINCE BEEN FREED OF ITS VEINS AND DISSIPATED INTO THE MURKY RIVER; NOTHING FLOWED FROM THE RAGGED **STUMPS** OF MY **ANKLES** AS I STRUGGLED TO THE SURFACE AGAINST THE HINDRANCE OF MY HEAVILY **BLOATED BODY...**

I WAS CONSCIOUS OF NO PAIN AS I HAULED MYSELF UP ONTO THE PIER AND STUMPED DOWN ITS WEATHERBEATEN PLANKS TOWARD LAND. I WAS CONSCIOUS OF ***NOTHING***... EXCEPT AN OVERWHELMING DESIRE FOR ***REVENGE***...

HOBBLING WITH AN UNDEFINED SPEED UPON THE SEVERED STUMPS OF MY STILT-LIKE ANKLES, I TROD THE WELL-REMEMBERED COURSE TO THE BOOTLEG DISTILLERY, FALLING EVERY FEW STEPS, SCRABBLING UP, AND PROCEEDING ***RELENTLESSLY*** UNTIL THE INNOCUOUS-SEEMING BUILDING WAS IN SIGHT...

WITHOUT WARNING OR PRE-THOUGHT OF THE CONSEQUENCES, I USED MY SUPRANORMAL STRENGTH TO BATTER DOWN THE DISTILLERY'S OUTER DOOR WITH ONE CRUNCHING ***BLUDGEON*** OF MY ATROPHIED ARM...

SCRUNTCHH!!

THE DOOR WAS UNLOCKED. I OPENED IT, ENTERED, AND CLOSED IT BEHIND ME WITH CAREFUL ***STEALTH***...

INSIDE THE AIRTIGHT DISTILLERY I WAS INUNDATED WITH THE CLANKING SOUNDS OF THE VAST DISTILLING MACHINES AND THE PUNGENT SCENT OF ***FERMETING LIQUOR***. THE VATS WERE STILL THERE AND IN OPERATION... AND SO WERE KARNO AND HIS TWO HENCHMEN, AGED CONSIDERABLY. I MUST HAVE BEEN 'DEAD' A ***LONG TIME***...

HOLY--! WHAT ***IS*** THAT THING?! GET HIM-- ***HIT*** HIM!

IT'S LIKE NOTHING I NEVER ***SEEN*** BEFORE--!

I REJOICED IN THE FRENZIED PANIC OF THEIR FACES, AND STUMPED THROUGH THEIR WITHERING OUTPUT OF FRANTICALLY DISCHARGED MACHINEGUN FIRE. THEY COULDN'T KILL ME; I WAS DEAD... AND FILLED WITH A LUST FOR VENGEANCE TRANSCENDING THE TENUOUS BONDS OF LIFE OR DEATH...
GET IT -- STOP THE THING, DAMN IT! HIT IT -- NAIL IT TO THE WALL!
CHRATTA-TA-CHRATTA-TA-CHAKKA-CHAKKA
I SNAPPED THEIR ARMS AND LEGS LIKE BRITTLE TWIGS, AND LOADED HEAVY CASES OF BOOTLEGGED LIQUOR UPON THEIR SQUIRMING BACKS, PINNING THEM TO THE FLOOR LIKE HELPLESS BUTTERFLIES.
MY ARMS --! MY LEGS! THEY'RE BROKEN -- CAN'T LIFT THESE WHISKEY CASES OFF ME -- PINNED DOWN -- WHAT'S IT GOING TO DO --?!
I ANSWERED HIS SHRIEKED QUESTION BY PUNCHED HOLES IN THE BASES OF THE HUGE DISTILLING VATS, RELEASING TORRENTIAL FLOODS OF THE ILLEGAL ALCOHOL. THEY HAD DROWNED ME, AND WITH POETIC JUSTICE SO TOO WOULD I DROWN THEM -- WITH THE ADDED TWIST OF BLOATING THEIR LUNGS WITH THEIR OWN BOOTLEGGED LIQUOR...
NO --! NO -- DON'T DO IT! PLEASE, OH GOD, PLEEEAASSEEE --!
KUNCH
SQUUNCH
FOOOSSSHHHH!
I RIPPED THE MASKING CURTAINS FROM THE WINDOW BEFORE I LEFT, MAKING CERTAIN THE MASSIVE DOOR SHUTTING THE AIRTIGHT, SOUNDPROOF, AND WATERPROOF -- OR LIQUORPROOF -- ROOM WAS SECURELY CLOSED. THEN I WATCHED THROUGH THE WINDOW FROM OUTSIDE. I WATCHED THEIR FUTILE STRUGGLES, THE PATHETIC JERK OF THEIR BROKEN LIMBS. I WATCHED THEM DROWN AS I HAD DROWNED. AND I FELT GOOD INSIDE...
THEN, HAVING PUT THE FINGER ON KARNO AND HIS HIT-MEN IN A MORE DIRECT WAY THAN THEY COULD HAVE IMAGINED, I STUMPED OFF INTO THE NIGHT...

. . . you people out there . . . you WEIRD readers . . . you have made the archaic editors VERY happy . . . you responded to the BUNCH OF QUESTIONS in **NIGHTMARE #10** in an OVERWHELMING way . . . we were DELUGED by your responses . . .

A BUNCH OF ANSWERS

. . . we have read every word of every letter you sent us (we always do . . . this is the truth . . . please believe this) . . . we are encouraged by your support . . . and GENUINELY INTERESTED in your CRITICISMS . . .

. . . we are SO interested in them . . . that this isue is officially the first of PHASE TWO, and for the very good REASON that your responses and suggestions are now going into **operation** . . . in the next few issues you'll see MORE changes . . . what YOU want (not what WE want to GIVE you — what YOU WANT!!) . . . we are devoting these letters/editorial pages this issue (and next) to some of your responses . . . and in **NIGHTMARE #12** there will appear A BIGGER BUNCH OF QUESTIONS for you to answer . . . so KEEP writing and continue to RATE each issue according to what you liked least through to the best . . .

. . . it's the ONLY way we can CONTINUE to improve and make things the way YOU like 'em . . . we kid you not . . .

Mr. Chung Wong of New York writes . . . "your mags have progressed at the greatest rate over any other magazines on the market, in the last few issues . . . I am grateful you mentioned **PILOTE** in **PSYCHO #9.** Things like that, not done for your publication's profit, but for reader 'revelation', are definite plus's for you and will reflect (I hope) in your market sales . . .

. . . apparently our mention of **PILOTE** drew a number of inquiries at the editorial offices of that excellent French periodical.

Bob Pinaha of Sayreville, New Jersey writes . . . "the slogan 'HORROR-MOOD' is a pure genius stroke and should appear on every cover! What I'd like to see in the stories is more experiments with different types of drawing . . . wash, screening, crowquill etc. . . ." Bob included a copy of his fanzine **TARGET #10** which we looked through and came up with the following reference in his NATTERING column: . . .' . . . on the recent comics scene, **NIGHTMARE #9** and the **NIGHTMARE ANNUAL** look promising. Both contain a very high standard of art and story surprisingly equalling and sometimes just falling short of stories reminiscent of the **E.C.** horror line of comics. My bet is that **SKYWALD,** which seems to have dropped its **HELL RIDER** and **CRIME MACHINE** titles to specialize in its horror titles, will give the **WARREN** line a run for its money in the very near future . . .'

Steve Dafoe of Spotswood, New Jersey, 20, writes . . . "please include more underground artists in the **SKYWALD** line . . ."

. . . see our blurb on Juvenile-Delinquent Jay Lynch in **NIGHTMARE #11** . . .

Trina Harvey of Cambria Heights, New York, 14, writes . . . "more vampires, witches, and more on the occult . . . and horror stories about things that COULD happen . . . and occasional 'funny' horrors . . ."

. . . MOST readers want more HORROR . . . some are violently opposed, and as for 'funny' horrors . . . we refer the reader to SKYWALD RE-WRITES THE GREAT HORROR-MOVIES which is intended as comic relief; appearing periodically . . .

Darrel McKenney of Georgetown, Kentucky, 15, writes . . . "feature the occasional classic horror adaptation . . ."

. . . watch for Edgar Allan Poe's PREMATURE BURIAL classic coming up soon . . . adapted by Archaic Al and Xerodermatic Xirinius . . .

Don Reed of Waddington, New York writes . . . "more covers like **PSYCHO #9,** and a full page 'drowning scene' done by Hewetson and Marcos . . ."

. . . watch for GREED soon . . . it fits that bill EXACTLY . . .

Dave Billman of Norton, Ohio, 18, writes . . . "I would like more ghost stories, tales of black magic, stories dealing with the insane as a source of fear, and more THOUGHT pieces, Rod Serling style . . ." . . . our ASYLUM ISSUE is **PSYCHO #12** . . . and it is insane . . .

Tony Speirs of Pleasanton, California writes . . . "I think you should have another horror magazine . . ."

. . . **SCREAM** . . . cause it is coming . . . and it is coming IMMINENTLY!!! . . .

Robert Burros of Ridgewood, New York, aged 35 plus, gives his used copies to orphanage kids who can't afford comics . . . our sincere thank you to this concerned and decent man who might be emulated by YOU . . . in this money grubbing society many readers take their issues to a 2nd hand store or such and SELL their used comics for MONEY . . . now . . . YOU tell US which you think is the better thing to do when you're through with that fat pile of old comics? YOU TELL US!! . . . why don't you and your friends get together and POOL your PILE and find out where the local orphanage is . . . then once a month give your used comics to those kids . . . nobody is suggesting you give up your COLLECTION . . . but you **do** buy **some** comics you don't keep don't you? Well here's what you can DO with them . . .

. . . are you a money conscious CRETIN or are you an imaginative humanitarian like Robert Burros? . . .

Mike Barros of Brighton, Massachusetts, 23, writes . . . "I do not like your featured horror . . . emulate **WARREN** . . ."

. . . no . . . we will NOT emulate **WARREN** . . .

. . . LUNATIC PICNIC . . .

. . . there are picnics . . . and there are picnics . . . THIS picnic kinda bends the mind a bit, for these 4 weird weekenders are having a barbecue in a GRAVEYARD . . . only 4 people we know are so into the HORROR-MOOD to even think of such a thing . . . Jagged Julie Hewetson, Dreadful Donna Fedory, Emotionally-disturbed Ed Fedory (doin' the cooking on the headstone there), and Archaic Al Hewetson asleep . . . dreaming up a tale called LUNATIC PICNIC, (oddly enough), which'll be appearing shortly . . .

. . . this . . .

. . . is Paranoic PABLO MARCOS . . .

. . . this man may not look it . . . but he has an EVIL MIND! His lunatic contributions to the SKYWALD HORROR-MOOD defy definition, except to suggest that they are the ultimate expression of pure GRAPHIC MADNESS . . .

. . . Pablo received more compliments as an artist in our BUNCH OF QUESTIONS answers than any other artist in the mood-team . . . an astonishing compliment for a retarded, crippled dwarf who has to draw with a brush between his TEETH . . .

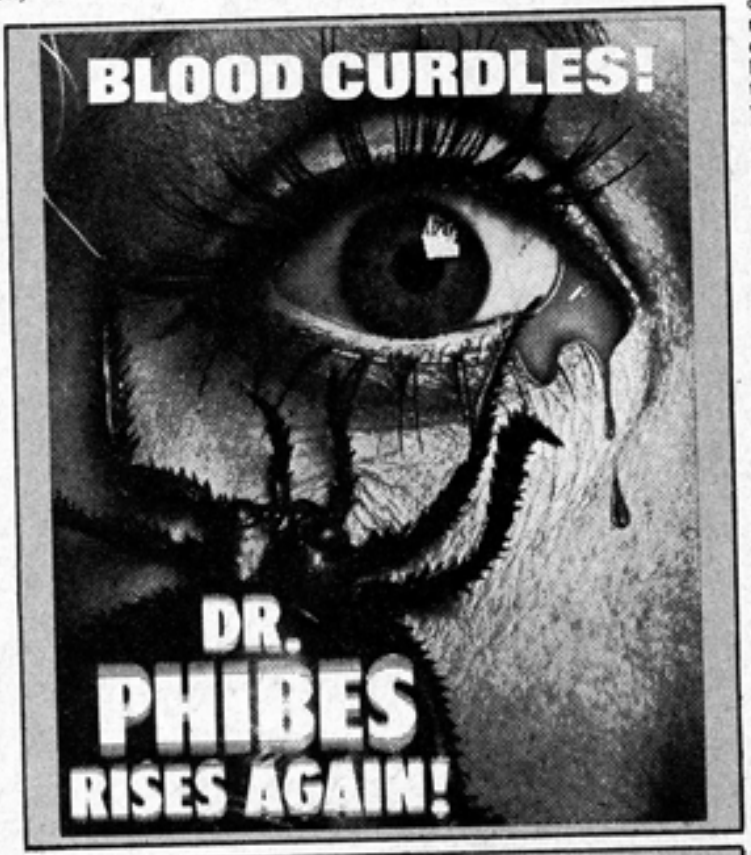
. . . he uses a toothbrush . . .

Ms. Lucille Monagle of Brooklyn, New York, 24, writes . . . "please . . . please . . . less ads . . ."

. . . good grief . . . we only have 4 pages . . . that's less than any other magazine in the field!! . . .

Hector Rambla of New York City writes . . . "I'm glad to see that you've added the great BASIL WOLVERTON to your team . . . now if only you could get GAHAN WILSON . . ."

. . . Bad Basil's position on the mood-team is an 'honorary' one, Hector . . . in **NIGHTMARE #12** Gruesome Gahan will be presented with an original and unpublished macabre cartoon . . .



VINCENT PRICE is never more EVIL than in DR. PHIBES RISES AGAIN . . . our photo feature in NIGHTMARE #12 . . . the maniacal character who was featured originally in NIGHTMARE #9 as THE ABOMINABLE DR. PHIBES rises from his macabre crypt and resumes his lusts to KILL YOU . . .

Donna Bedgood of Macon, Georgia, 23, writes: . . . "your stories are better than Rod Serling's and he's pretty good . . ."

. . . who is this ROD SERLING guy everybody likens us to? . . . heh heh . . .

Many readers like Tony Chow of Yorkton, Saskatchewan, 15, did not want to mutilate the magazine by tearing out the coupon . . . and so wrote a letter instead . . . "yes I'd like to see a magazine-book selling for $1.00. But only as a special issue . . . I wouldn't want all **NIGHTMARE** and **PSYCHO** issues to go up to that high a price . . ."

. . . don't worry people . . . we ARE only talking about a SPECIAL ISSUE every now and then . . .

Daisy Ehrlich of Brooklyn, New York, 17, writes . . . "I give my used copies to FRIENDS to read . . ."

. . . several readers have suggested they've done this and completely converted friends to the **'horror-mood'** . . .

John Pasquale of Bronx, New York, 15, writes . . . "I like your HORROR-MOOD . . . new approaches such as the FRANKENSTEIN series are greatly appreciated . . ."

. . . FRANKENSTEIN 1973 has already been scripted by Archaic Al and Viscious Villanova is working on the artwork this very minute . . . it'll be released shortly along with several BRAND-NEW continued characters to complement the HEAP and THE HUMAN GARGOYLES . . . all of which received rave reviews . . .

Michael Fleming of Richmond, Virginia, writes . . . "my favorite writer is ALAN HEWETSON . . ."

. . . Archaic Al scored the highest of us all . . . if I could congratulate myself in my own letters column I would but I can't so I won't . . . but thanks people . . .

Joseph Peterson of Chicago, Illinois, 19, writes (on that same matter) . . . "why do you always write your letters / editorial column in the 3rd person . . . you must be a very macabre person, Al . . ."

. . . I don't know why I do it Joe, but let me tell you IT GETS VERY VERY CONFUSING after a while . . .

Margaret Croom of Wilmington, North Carolina, 20, writes . . . "how about more on **werewolves** . . . more of THE HUMAN GARGOYLES and more of the HEAP . . ."

. . . this is as good a time as ANY to announce one of our special new continued characters . . . THE WEREWOLF MACABRE . . . it's coming soon . . . miss it not . . . in **NIGHTMARE #12** we'll feature MORE of your answers . . . meanwhile . . . thanks to Duncan Thomas, Dane Lee, Mark Betcher, Eric Schulz, Joe Zudala, Ed Faibarik, Bob Kimberlain, Elliot Feintuch, Mark Egan, Daniel Louie, Paul Dunatscheck, Joseph Szymaniak, Francis Mattern, Bob Denicola, Andy Goodman, Jack Monninger, Joe Cavaleir and to the many many others we'll comment on next issue . . .

. . . and an especial thanks to Duffy Vohland of Clarksburg, Indiana, age 20, who "hopes I've been a help" . . . are you kidding?? . . .

. . . YES YOU HAVE!!! . . .

R.I.P.

THIS IS THE MACABRE STORY OF A SINGLE NIGHT... AND A STARTLING MORNING AFTER... IT CONCERNS A POPULAR REAL-LIFE NIGHTCLUB-T.V. PERSONALITY CALLED, HEREIN ONLY, **'STANLEY'**-- IT IS **HIS** STORY AND HE TELLS IT TO US RATHER **SHUDDERINGLY... HALTINGLY...**

...**PRIMP** NOW STANLEY, GO OVER THE ROUTINES AND PERFECT YOUR PERFORMANCE AS YOU DRESS AND MAKE READY... FOR THE NIGHT OF YOUR **LIFE...**

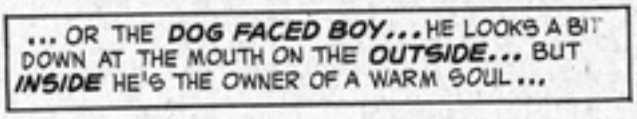
WHATEVER THOUGHTS YOU MAY HIDE... WHATEVER INSECURITIES YOU MAY HARBOR ABOUT YOUR MATERIAL... NOW THEY NO LONGER MATTER... YESTERDAY IS **GONE**... THE LAST GREAT REHEARSAL IS **OVER**... TONIGHT HAS COME AND THE PERFORMANCE OF YOUR **LIFE** DRAWS **CLOSER...**

DON'T DIE UP THERE STANLEY

CAN
THE STATEN ISLAND PUB... NEVER HEARD OF IT... STILL... FOR A BOOKING WORTH 5 BILLS FOR ONE WEEK I'LL PLAY ANYWHERE...
TONIGHT -- T.V. NIGHT- PERSONALITY: STANLEY
IN PERSON: CLUB COMIC
THE STATEN ISLAND PUB
...DOESN'T LOOK TOO DUMPY THO... I'VE PLAYED IN PLACES FAR WORSE... GOD, WHAT A NIGHT... DON'T USUALLY MIND THE RAIN... BUT TONIGHT IT SEEMS UNUSUALLY DIRTY...
...WE'LL I'VE GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT THAN DIRTY RAIN... LIKE OPENING NIGHT STOMACH JITTERS... SNARLING IN MY GUT...
...THIS NIGHT IS VIRTUALLY FETID... THE RAIN STINKS, THE AIR IS FILLED WITH UNDECIPHERABLE MUCK; THE NIGHTCLUB LOOKS INVITING FROM THE OUTSIDE... BUT WITHIN THE SMOKE AND LIQUOR SMELL AND BODY SWEAT CURDLES IN UGLY POOLS ABOUT THE FLOOR... IT IS INDEED A FETID NIGHT...
I FEEL APPREHENSIVE AS ALL HELL... DON'T WANNA BOMB JUST BECAUSE OF A FEW LOUSY NERVES!
HEWETSON + SUSO
...ONE WITH WITH WE START OUR TALE...
..DEDICATED TO THE REAL LIFE STANLEY...

DAMN... CAN HARDLY BREATHE THIS AIR... WHATTA STINK... MUST BE ME... MY IMAGINATION ...
...WONDER WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE OUT THERE... I'LL PEEK THROUGH THE STAGE CURTAIN...
STANLEY...
...YUH...
BIG
STANLEY... GLAD YOU MADE IT A FEW MINUTES AHEAD OF TIME... SOMETHING I WANNA TELL YOU...'BOUT THE AUDIENCE TONIGHT...
WHAT IS IT BERNIE... CONVENTION CROWD OR SOMETHIN'...
YOU MIGHT SAY THAT... YOU MIGHT...THERE ARE 3 CIRCUS GROUPS IN TOWN STANLEY...
OH... A BUNCH OF CIRCUS TYPES...
YEH...BUT MORE THAN JUST ORDINARY CIRCUS TYPES... TONIGHT...YOU'RE PLAYING BEFORE 30 OR 40 FREAKS...
OH COME ON STANLEY... DON'T TAKE IT SO HARD... WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?
THE BIG DEAL IS MY ACT IS SHOT DOWN THE DRAIN...
...GEEZ...TALK ABOUT LOUSY COINCIDENCIES...THAT WAS WHAT MY ACT WAS ALL ABOUT BERNIE...I TOLD YOU I HAD A NEW ROUTINE... WELL, GOD, IT WAS A PARODY OF...OF ALL THINGS...A CIRCUS FREAK THAT GETS DRUNK--ONE NIGHT HE PAINTS THE TOWN RED...
OH STANLEY... HELL... I'M SORRY...
LISTEN BERNIE...YOU GOTTA GET ME OUTTA THIS SOMEHOW... YOU MUST--YOU CAN DO IT...YOU'RE MY AGENT... WORK OUT A DEAL WITH THE OWNER OF THIS PLACE...
COME ON STAN...YOU KNOW BETTERN' THAT... YOU CAN'T BACK DOWN NOW...IT'S TOO LATE... WHY DON'T YOU JUST DO OTHER MATERIAL?

STANLEY IS RATHER APPREHENSIVE ABOUT HIS PERFORMANCE... BUT PERHAPS HE SHOULDN'T BE... THESE GOOD PEOPLE LOOK KINDLY ENOUGH... MAYBE THEY WON'T MIND BEING RIBBED A LITTLE...
...LIKE THIS FAT LADY... THERE'S A HAPPY HEART INSIDE HER...



...EVEN HUBERT THE MEDIOCRE HORROR, THE MAN WHO HAS THE APPEARANCE OF NOT REALLY EXISTING, HAS A FEW PEBBLES OF KINDNESS WITHIN...

...THERE ARE OTHERS... ALL HAPPY PEOPLE... ALL WAITING TO GREET THE NIGHTCLUB COMIC WITH A SLITHERING SMILE...

GOOD EVENING LADIES AND GENTLEMEN... NON-ENTITIES ALL OF YOU... I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MANY DULL AND UNINTERESTING PEOPLE GATHERED IN ONE ROOM BEFORE...
HEY... THEY'RE LAUGHING... NOT A BAD START ...BROKE THE ICE FAST...
HAHA
I TELL YOU FOLKS...I'VE BEEN GOING TO THE CIRCUS FOR YEARS...AND I'VE ALWAYS ENJOYED YOU VERY MUCH...SO I'D LIKE TO TRY SOMETHING VERY SPECIAL TONIGHT... JUST FOR YOU...
... PICTURE THE PERSON SITTING NEXT TO YOU OUT FOR A NIGHT ON THE TOWN... AN' HE GETS RATHER DRUNK... THIS IS HOW IT MIGHT GO...
HAHAHA
NEVER DO PSYCHIATRIST JOKES AT A PSYCHIATRIST'S CONVENTION...NEVER DO DRUNK JOKES AT A SALVATION ARMY HOSTEL... THE FIRST LAW OF COMEDY... AN' HERE I AM DOING A FREAK SKETCH IN FRONT OF A BUNCH OF FREAKS... I MUST BE OUT OF MY MIND!
Y'KNOW BARTENDER... THE LAST TIME I WENT ON A DRUNK, I NEARLY NEVER MADE IT BACK TO THE CIRCUS...AS I TURNED A CORNER SOME BUM STOOD ON MY HANDS...
... ALL THREE OF 'EM...
Y'KNOW I I MET A GIRL THE OTHER DAY...WE WERE MADE FOR EACH OTHER... BUT WHEN WE KISSED, HER MOUSTACHE GOT STUCK ON THE RUBBER CEMENT I USE TO KEEP MY MOUTH FROM HANGING OPEN...

THEY'RE LAUGHING THEIR HEADS OFF!!
HEY- THAT GUY AT THE BACK THERE... HOW CAN I CONCENTRATE ON MY ACT WHEN YOU KEEP NIBBLING ON YOUR LEFT EAR...
HAHA HA HAHAHA
HAHAHA
...PUT IT BACK ON THE FLOOR WHERE IT BELONGS AND PAY ATTENTION HAH?
I'M INSULTING THEM AN' THEY'RE KILLIN' THEMSELVES LAUGHING...
HAHAHA HAHAHA
Y' KNOW BARTENDER... MY WIFE STARTED RUNNING AROUND BEHIND MY BACK LAST WEEK WHEN I WAS OUTTA TOWN FOR A NIGHT... SHE WAS FOOLIN' AROUND WITH THE PORCUPINE - SKIN MAN...
... I NEVER WOULD'VE KNOWN IF I HADN'T DISCOVERED ALL THOSE NEEDLES STUCK IN MY ELECTRIC SHAVER WHEN I GOT BACK...
HAHAHA HAHAHA
HA HA HA HA HAHAHAHA
THIS IS BEAUTIFUL... I'VE GOT THEM EATING OUT OF MY HANDS... THEY'RE LAUGHING LIKE IT'S THE FIRST TIME IN THEIR LIVES THEY'VE EVER LAUGHED AT ANYTHING...

THANK YOU FOLKS... YOU'VE BEEN BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE... REALLY BEAUTIFUL...
DON'T LEAVE US NOW STANLEY... NOT ALREADY...
'FRAID I GOTTA DEAR LADY... THIS IS THE END OF MY ACT... OF COURSE... IF I HAD AN END LIKE YOURS I COULD GO ON FOREVER...
C'MON STANLEY... GIVE US A FEW MORE ONE LINERS...
NO STANLEY... GIVE US MORE FREAK JOKES... THAT'S WHAT WE WANT...
DID' JA HEAR THE ONE ABOUT THE TWO DIPLOMATS... ONE SAYS TO THE OTHER... 'WHADDO YOU THINK OF RED CHINA?', AND THE OTHER ONE ANSWERS... I DUNNO... IT WOULDN'T LOOK BAD ON A YELLOW TABLECLOTH!'
...FREAK JOKES!
I DON'T KNOW ANYMORE FREAK JOKES...
C'MON STANLEY... MORE FREAK JOKES...
HAHAHAHAHAHA
...LITTLE KID SAYS TO HIS MOTHER... 'MOMMY, CAN I COME TO THE BEACH WITH YOU AN' DADDY TODAY?'... MOTHER ANSWERS... 'DON'T BE SUCH A CREEP JUNIOR... YOU KNOW YOUR IRON LUNG DOESN'T FIT IN THE VOLKSWAGON...'

MORE STANLEY... MORE...
THIS IS BEAUTIFUL... THEY'RE LAPPING UP EVERY WORD... EVERY WORD!
...THREE LITTLE KIDS COME KNOCKING AT THE FRONT DOOR OF THEIR FRIEND'S HOUSE: 'MRS. HARKER... CAN LITTLE MOE COME OUT AN' PLAY BASEBALL WITH US?'... MOTHER SAYS... 'C'MON... YOU KNOW LITTLE MOE HAS NO ARMS OR LEGS'... 'THAT'S OKAY', SAY THE KIDS... 'WE JUST WANNA USE HIM FOR THIRD BASE!'
THE OLDEST JOKES IN THE WORLD... I'M THROWING THE OLDEST JOKES IN THE WORLD AT THEM AN' THEY'RE BREAKIN' RIGHT UP...
...BUT I'M RUNNING OUT OF GAGS... GOT NOTHIN' LEFT... NOTHIN'...
REALLY FOLKS... I... I HAVEN'T GOT ANYMORE...
C'MON STANLEY... MORE...
HAHAHAHA
MORE STANLEY...
...TWO LITTLE... TWO LITTLE KIDS IN SWITZERLAND NAMED HANS AND FRITZ... GO UP TO A... MOUNTAIN TOP WITH THEIR MAMMA... FRITZ SHOVES THE MOTHER OFF THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF... TURNS TO HIS BROTHER AN' SAYS... 'LOOK HANS... NO MA...'
...MORE STANLEY... MORE...
I AIN'T GOT NO MORE... AIN'T GOT NO MORE REALLY...
GIVE US MORE STANLEY... GIVE US MORE! ...MORE...

HEY BUDDY... THE SHOW'S OVER... ENDED HOURS AGO... IF YOU LIKED THE SHOW SO MUCH WHY'D YOU FALL ASLEEP?...

ASLEEP... GOD...WHERE AM I?... A BLOODY FREAK TENT... IT WAS ONLY A DREAM... OH NO... *PLEASE*...

...IT CAN'T BE JUST A *DREAM*...

IT'S *NOT FAIR*... NOT FAIR... IT CAN'T HAVE BEEN JUST A *DREAM*... *NO*... *NO*...

...THE GREATEST PERFORMANCE OF MY *WHOLE DAMN LIFE* AND YOU TELL ME IT WAS A *DREAM*? *NO*... I WON'T ACCEPT IT... IT ISN'T *FAIR*...

IT ISN'T FAIR!

...IT ISN'T FAIR...

LEST YOU THINK THIS IS THE CONCLUSION... THE PROVERBIAL *TWIST*... YOU ARE CRIMINALLY *WRONG*... YOU DO STANLEY AN *INJUSTICE*... A *GRAVE, EVIL, INEXCUSABLE INJUSTICE*... FOR THE CONCLUSION IS YET TO FOLLOW...

THIS IS THE CONCLUSION, WE PITIFULLY ADMIT... ADMIT ALONG WITH 30 OR 40 SADDENED CIRCUS *FREAKS* WHO COME TO STANLEY'S BESIDE... *LISTEN* TO THEIR WORDS BEFORE YOU SUDDENLY END YOUR UNFULFILLED INTEREST IN THIS TALE OF THE MACABRE...

WE PUSHED HIM TOO *FAR*... HE NEEDED AN *ESCAPE*... GOD KNOWS WHERE HIS MIND IS NOW... IT'S *MY* FAULT... I GRABBED HIM... NO-ONE ELSE...

IT WAS *MY* FAULT... I GOT CARRIED AWAY *FIRST*... DEMANDED *MORE*...

HE WAS SUCH A NICE MAN... SO NICE... SO INTELLIGENT... HE WAS ONE OF *US* IN A WAY... HE LOVED US... AS WE CAME TO LOVE *HIM* LAST NIGHT...

WE ALL SCREAMED JUST AS LOUD... WE *ALL* LOVED HIM... ...THE FIRST MAN WE EVER KNEW... TREATED US LIKE HUMAN BEINGS WITH GENUINE EMOTIONS... YET ALSO TREATED US AS *ENTITIES*... *FREAKS*... HE STOOD UP ON THAT STAGE AND IN HIS *HUMOR* HE SAID TO US... *'SO WHAT?'*... AND MADE US LAUGH...

VERY FEW PEOPLE CAN MAKE A FREAK *LAUGH*... STANLEY WAS ONE... NOW HE'S A *LUNATIC*... LUNATICS MAKE *NO-ONE* LAUGH...

...AND *NOW* THAT YOU KNOW THE TRUTH... NOW YOU CAN JOIN THE FREAKS IN WEEPING FOR THE FUNNY MAN... ...R.I.P. STANLEY...

...IT IS THE 19th OF SEPTEMBER, 1881, AS WE JOIN SEVERAL MACABRE PARTY GUESTS AT ***DARKKOS MANSION***... A BLACK AND DARK HOUSE OF ***EVIL*** REPUTE IN THE FORBIDDEN SWAMPLANDS TO THIS NATION'S SOUTH... NEARBY IN NEW ORLEANS, FROM WHENCE COMES THE ***OWNER*** OF THE MANSE: ***REGISTER HARLOWE;*** BUT HE HAS LIVED IN THIS PLACE MANY YEARS NOW, AND HAS ESTABLISHED AN INFAMOUS REPUTATION HERE... A BACKGROUND THAT WE SHALL LEARN IS LINKED WITH THE ***WEIRDEST*** RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE KNOWN TO MANKIND... THE CULT ***VOODOO***...

...AND SO WE START OUR TALE...

...THE THING IN HORROR-SWAMP

(BEING THE ORIGIN TALE OF DARKKOS MANSION)

...ENTER NOW PROFESSOR EDWIN GUNN, A YOUNG MAN-PERHAPS A ***NAIVE*** MAN; HE HAD BEEN INVITED TO ***DARKKOS MANSION*** FOR THE WEEKEND AS THE GUEST OF THE HARLOWE ***SON*** ELDRIDGE HARLOWE... WITH WHOM HE RECENTLY ATTENDED SCHOOL IN NEW ORLEANS...

...THE COACHMAN PULLS TO A SHUNT AND THEN A CRAWLING HALT AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE MANSE, FINDING HIS WAY BARRED BY SEVERAL GAUNT AND BLANK-EYED LOCALS WHO DEMAND HE PULL UP HIS REIGNS...

HOLE UP THERE... WHOAH...

WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE PROBLEM DRIVER?

THE WAY IS BLOCKED SIR... SOME LOCALS WON'T LET US PASS FOR SOME REASON...

WHAT IS WRONG? WHAT IS THE TROUBLE?

DON'T BE A ***FOOL!***

I BEG YOUR PARDON?

DO NOT ENTER THIS PLACE AT THE RISK OF YOUR LIFE...

...THIS PLACE IS THE HOUSE OF THE VOODOO...

...VOODOO?

YOU'RE ***MAD***... ARE YOU FROM SOME LUNATIC ASYLUM HEREABOUTS?

YOU HAVE BEEN FAIRLY WARNED...

YOU DON'T SCARE ME... YOU'RE ALL OUT OF YOUR ***WITS...***

IT IS NOT ***US*** TO BE AFEARED OF SIR...

...NOT ***US***

...BUT ***HIM*** ***WITHIN...***

COLONEL HARLOWE?

WHY I'VE NEVER MET THE GENTLEMAN... ALTHOUGH HIS ***SON*** IS A GENTLEMAN...

...NOT A GENTLEMAN LIKE ***YOU*** SIR... NO... YOU SHALL SEE WE SAY NO MORE...

...WE SEE WE CANNOT PERSUADE YOU... BUT REMEMBER ***OUR WARNING...***

...PROFESSOR GUNN'S WELCOME AT THE MANSE WAS QUITE WARMER THAN AT THE FRONT GATE...
...EDWIN...
...EDWIN... WELCOME MY FRIEND... WELCOME...
MY GOD IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN ELDRIDGE... VERY GOOD...

...AND IN THE EXCITEMENT OF MANY INTRODUCTIONS THE INCIDENT WAS FORGOTTEN...
...I WANT TO INTRODUCE MY FATHER TO YOU EDWIN...
...COLONEL REGISTER HARLOWE...
I AM HONOURED TO MEET YOU SIR... YOUR SON SPOKE OF YOU OFTEN WHEN WE WERE IN UNIVERSITY TOGETHER...
I YUH AH'M-AH-PLEEEA-S-ED TO MEET YEW TOO SUH...
...MAH SON HAIS SPO-KEN TO ME OF YEW-IN-MOST FLATTERIN' TERMS...

THIS IS MAH DAUGHTA... WHO HAS JUST COME BACK TO ME FROM THE CITEE OF LON-DON IN-- ENGLAND WHERE SHE WUS AH TAKIN' HER ED-UCATION... ...MAYLINE...
I AM PLEASED... I NEVER IMAGINED YOU WERE THIS BEAUTIFUL MAYLINE...
DID MY BROTHER NOT SPEAK HIGHLY OF ME PROFESSOR?
HE DID MISS MAYLINE...
...BUT I ASSUMED HE WAS MERELY BEING A POLITE BROTHER... I DID NOT, I REGRET, TAKE HIM SERIOUSLY OR I WOULD HAVE FOUND AN EXCUSE TO VISIT DARKKOS MANSE SOONER
...AND PLEASE MILADY... PLEASE DO ME THE HONOR OF CALLING ME EDWIN...

...THE TWO EXCHANGED KNOWING SMILES AND LOOKED INTO EACH OTHER'S EYES...AND DURING THEIR FIRST TOUCH DURING THEIR FIRST DANCE THEY BECAME IN LOVE...

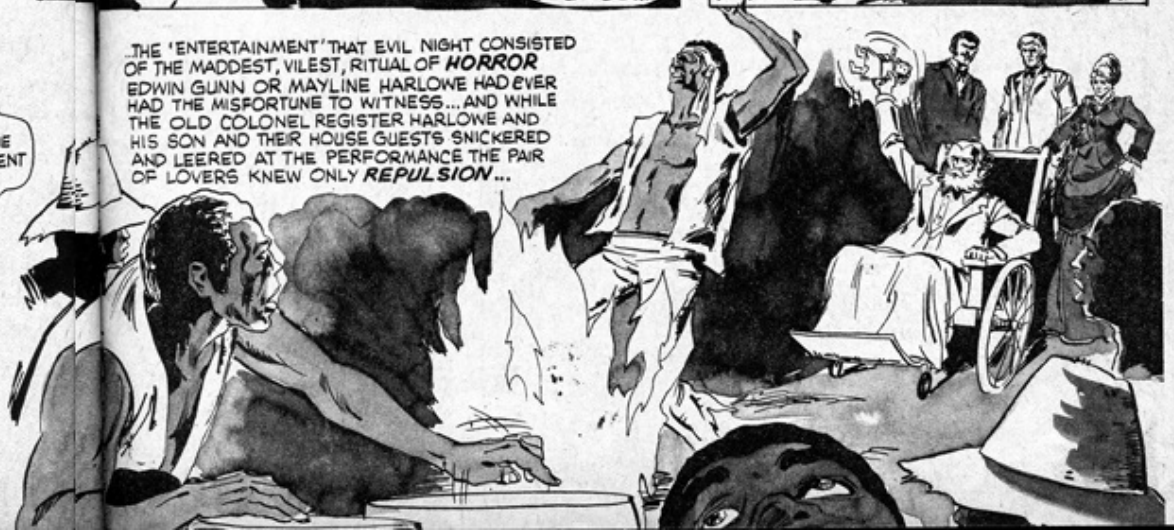
MAYLINE-- WOULD-AH-YOU-ALL ES-CORT THIS YOUNG-AH-MAN TO THE TERRACE...
...AH HAVE PLANNED SOME-AH...ENTERTAINMENT FOR US ALL THIS-AH-NIGHT...
MY PLEASURE FATHER
ENTERTAINMENT SIR?
I TRUST-- HAH HAH-- IT DOES NOT INVOLVE VOODOO...

WHUT-DID-YEW-SAY-SUH?
VOODOO-- SOME LOCALS MET ME AT THE GATE AND BABBLED SOMETHING ABOUT VOODOO...
LOCALS-- PAH!!... THEY KNOW NOTHIN' SUH-- ONLY WHUT AH TELL THEM... ...HEND THET IS NOT MUCH...

WHAT DID THEY MEAN THO SIR?
YES FATHER-- WHAT DID THEY MEAN? YOU'RE NOT MIXED-UP IN ANYTHING ARE YOU?
YEW BEEN 'WAY FUM HOME A WHILE DAUGHTAH... MANY THINGS HAV-AH-HAPPENED DURING YOUR... STAY IN ENGLAND...

THERE-AH-STUPID LOCALS GUT THEMSEL MIXED-UP IN THIS-AH-VOO-DOO THENG AS A--RELIGIOUS EX-OR-CISE...
...AH HAVE TAKEN IT UPON MAHSELF TO--AH--MAKE SURE THEY DON'T GIT OUTTA HAND...
MASTER... OH MASTER...

MASTER? FATHER! MASTER?
...ARE YOU SURE THIS IS...
MAYLINE... HUSH UP NAH GIRL... AH THAINK THE ENTOORTAINMENT IS GONNA BEGIN...


...THE 'ENTERTAINMENT' THAT EVIL NIGHT CONSISTED OF THE MADDEST, VILEST, RITUAL OF HORROR EDWIN GUNN OR MAYLINE HARLOWE HAD EVER HAD THE MISFORTUNE TO WITNESS... AND WHILE THE OLD COLONEL REGISTER HARLOWE AND HIS SON AND THEIR HOUSE GUESTS SNICKERED AND LEERED AT THE PERFORMANCE THE PAIR OF LOVERS KNEW ONLY REPULSION...

...OH FATHER...
...HOW CAN YOU ALLOW SUCH A DISGUSTING PERFORMANCE
ELDRIDGE... HAVE YOU GONE MAD?
YOU NOT ONLY APPEAR TO CONDONE THIS YOU ACTUALLY SEEM TO ENJOY IT...

INDEED AH DO...
...AH ENJOY IT TREMENDOUSLY...
...AND FATHER IS THEIR PRIEST!...
PRIEST... ...OH FATHER...

MAYLINE!

MAYLINE... STOP...

EAAAGODAA
MAYLINE!

...YOU ARE RE-SPONSIBLE FAH THIS
...YEW KILLED HAH...
...YOU OLD CREEP...
...YOUR DAUGHTER SINKS TO A HORRIBLE DEATH AND YOU SPEW MUCK LIKE THAT FROM YOUR FOUL MOUTH TO JUSTIFY AND RATIONALIZE YOUR FILTH...

SHETTUP GUNN!
WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS THAT?
YEW GUNN... MAH VOODOO CON-TRIVANCE OF YEW...
...AND AH SWEAH TO THE LORD GUNN... AH'M GONNA MAKE YOU JOIN MAH DAUGHTER IN THAT DEATH PIT...

...YOU'RE MAD...
...PERHAPS MAD... BUT PROFESSOR GUNN WAS IMPELLED TO MOVE INTO THE SWAMP AND MADE TO STAND IN A FIXED SPOT POSITION TIEL HE SANK AND DIED... SUCH IS REGISTER HARLOWE...
...SUCH IS VOODOO...

...THAT NIGHT REGISTER HARLOWE MADE A *MISTAKE*...

...IT TROD TO THE SOUND OF THE CHANTING... PAUSED HERE AND THERE TO WATCH ITS FOOTFALLS... DRAWN TO THE SOUND OF THE RITUAL... PULLED THROUGH THE MUCKY-GRAVE INTO LIFE... A *KIND* OF *LIFE*... FOR THOSE WHO KNOW HIM WOULD CALL HIM A... *ZOMBIE*...

...YES... HARLOWE SHOULD BE *CRUSHED*...

...THEY KNEW THE RITUAL DANCE OF THE DOLL WELL... AND PERFORMED IT SPECIALLY WELL THIS NIGHT... FOR THEY HAD POWER, AND KNEW IT, AND WERE BENT ON BRINGING BACK EDWIN GUNN FROM HIS *GRAVE*...

...WHY?...

...WE NEED YOUR HELP!...

...THE HELP OF A CORPSE?

IF THAT BE WHAT IT TAKES ...*YES!*

HARLOWE
...AH DROVE YEW INTO THET SWAMP once GUNN... WHEN YEW WERE RE-SPONSIBLE FOR MAH DAUGHTA'S DEATH...
...NOW YEW KILL MAH SON... AH'LL DRIVE YEW INTO THET PIT AGAIN... THES TIME TO STAY
YEW SEE GUNN ...AH AM PRE-PARED...
...GO GUNN... BACK TO YEWR GRAVE!!

...MAH HOUSE... DARKKOS... IN FLAME...
... AS THAT PLACE SHOULD BE HARLOWE...
YEW DARE THREATEN ME-- YEW NOTHINGS... DIDN'T YA'LL SEE WHUT AH DID TO HEM THAR? ... HAH?
... YEW KNOW WHUT AH CAIN DEW TEW YEW?...
NOTHING!

WE BROUGHT HIM BACK HARLOWE ...KNOWING YOU WOULD BE PREPARED TO DRIVE HIM BACK...
...GOD ... UNARMED.. NO VOODOO CON-STRUCTIONS TO CONTROL YEW...
...NOW YOU ARE UNARMED... OUR PLAN...
YES HARLOWE... YOU HAVE NOTHING...
NOW WE WANT TO BE FREE MEN HARLOWE... YOU HAVE NO DOLLS TO PROTECT YOU... NO VOODOO MAGIC...

...THERE WERE 4 DEATHS THAT NIGHT... AND 27 RE-BIRTHS OF ZOMBIES INTO **HUMANS**... THEY, LEFT **DARKKOS** AND MOVED **EAST** OR **WEST** OR **NORTH**... AND **DARKKOS BURNED**... TILL IT **CRUMBLED**... AND **CRUMBLED** TILL IT TOO WAS **DEAD**... ...AND ONLY IN **THIS** YEAR IT BECOME **ALIVE AGAIN**... ITS **NEW** INHABITANTS A **WEREWOLF** AND A **HEAP**... AS YOU SHALL READ ELSEWHERE IN THIS VERY ISSUE... AND IN FUTURE ISSUES TOO... WHEN AGAIN... AND AGAIN... WE WILL RETURN TO THIS **HORROR MANSE**...

...**DARKKOS**...

...THE WRECKING BALL LIFTS...
...LIFTS HIGHER INTO THE SHRIEKING LOS ANGELES DAWN... HIGHER INTO THE BLUE-WHITE SKY...
...STEADIES...
...THEN DROPS ON AN OLD MAN'S LIFE... CRUNCHES IT... DEVOURS IT...
...HE SITS BESIDE HIS HOME... HIS DEMOLISHED RESIDENCE OF 27 YEARS... SITS CRYING... HIS HEAD BURIED IN HIS HANDS... WEEPING... SOBBING... AND ALTHOUGH THIS IS ALMOST HOW WE END, IT IS ALSO -- HOW WE START OUR TALE OF...
A BAG OF FLEAS
AL HEWETSON AND JOSE GUAL

...LET US GO BACK SOME WEEKS TO WHEN THIS HOUSE WAS WHOLE...

..REGGIE WHYTE... JANITOR: A HAPPY MAN, NOW OLD, OF FEW PLEASURES... ALL OF WHICH ARE SIMPLE: HE LIKES TO WATCH T.V., LIKES TO DRINK IMPORTED STOUT FROM HIS NATIVE ENGLAND...

...LIKES TO GO TO THE PARK NEXT TO THE APARTMENT BLOCK AND WATCH THE GIRLS...

...A MAN OF FEW VICES... WITH FEW FRIENDS, NO RELATIVES WITHIN A FEW THOUSAND MILES TO BOTHER HIM... NO DEBTS... NO COMPLAINTS...

...AFTER THE GREAT WAR IN WHICH HE WAS A BRITISH SERGEANT, HE AND HIS CHILDLESS WIFE KATE CAME TO L.A....

...LIKE SHAKESPEARE'S KATE SHE TOO WAS A ***SHREW***... HARPING AT HIM ABOUT HIS MENIAL JOB AS A JANITOR IN THIS 'FLEA BAG' APARTMENT BLOCK...

...THEY SEEMED TO SCREAM AT EACH OTHER ALL DAY AND NIGHT, SHE (KNOWING HOW MUCH HE DESPISED AMERICAN SLANG) SHOUTING ABOUT THE FLEA BAG THEY LIVED IN...

...HE (KNOWING HOW MUCH HIS AFFECTED LONDON ACCENT 'HURT HIS WIFE'S EARS) BELLOWING BACK IN HIS SERGEANT'S VOICE THAT IT WAS 'A BAG OF FLEAS' MY DEAR... TRY TO RAISE YOUR LITERACY LEVEL A LITTLE YOU COMMON LIVERPOOL TROLLOP...

...WHEN THE ARGUING CAME TO BLOWS IT WAS EVIDENT SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE ABOUT THEIR MARRIAGE...

...SOMETHING ***WAS***... SHE ***LEFT HIM*** TO RETURN TO BRITAIN...

REGGIE THEN JUST GREW OLD... KEPT HIS PETS AND MADE THEM HAPPY COMPANIONS... KEPT HIS JOB...

...WATCHED GIRL'S LEGS THRU THE GRATING OF HIS BASEMENT APARTMENT WINDOW...

...IN TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS NOTHING MUCH HAPPENED TO REGGIE WHYTE...

TAPPP

...UNTIL ONE NIGHT WHEN HE HEARD A SINGLE TAP ON HIS DOOR... THE LANDLORD'S SINGLE FAMILIAR TAP...

REGGIE... HOW ARE YOU TONIGHT? WELL I HOPE...

...I... HAVE A BIT OF NEWS FOR YOU REGGIE... BETTER SIT DOWN...

...JUST GETTIN' OVER A BIT OF COLD SIRRR... BUT OTHERWISE I'M FEELIN' JUST FINE... YESSIRR..

I'M FINE STANDIN' SIRRR ...FINE STANDIN' ...WHAT'S THE NEWS SIRRR.?...

...WE'RE TEARING THIS FLEA BAG DOWN NEXT MONTH...

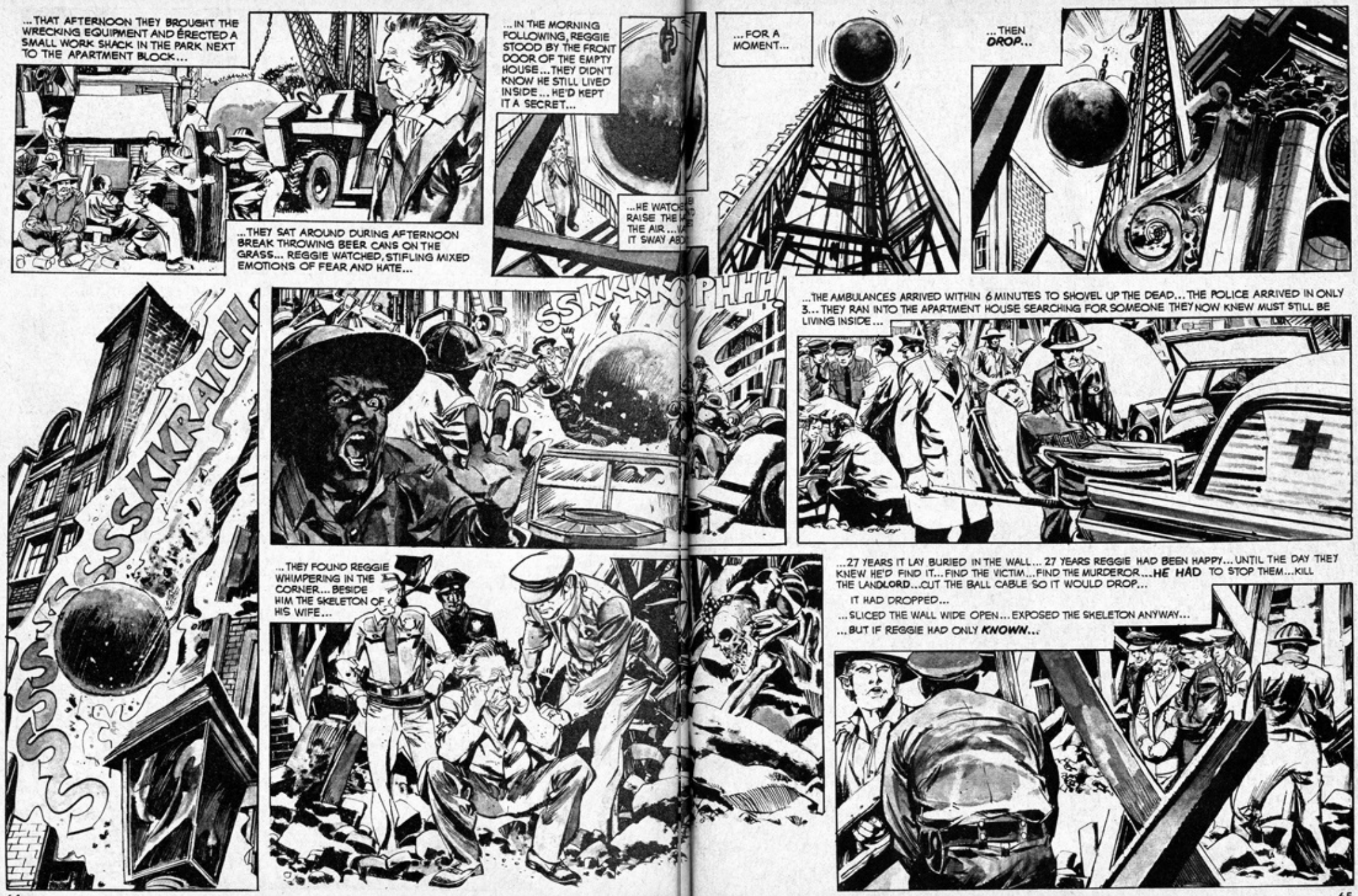
TEARIN' IT DOWN SIRRR... TEARING IT DOWN.?... BUT IT'S MY HOME SIR... THIS IS MY HOME...

YES I KNOW REGGIE.. IT'S ALSO THE HOME FOR 30 OTHER FAMILIES LIVING ABOVE YOU... BUT THIS IS NO CRITERIA FOR THE PLACE NOT TO BE TORN DOWN...

...I'M RETIRING... WANT TO SELL OUT ALL MY HOLDINGS... NOBODY WILL WANT TO KEEP IT AS THE FLEA BAG IT NOW IS... I FOUND SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO TURN IT INTO A... PARKING LOT...

...A PARKING LOT SIRR...?

SO I'LL HAVE TO GIVE YOU NOTICE REGGIE...
...YOU'VE TILL THE END OF THE MONTH TO LEAVE... ALONG WITH THE OTHERS...
...I'LL GIVE YOU AN EXTRA MONTH'S PAY SO YOU CAN FIND SOMEPLACE ELSE TO WORK...
...AND LIVE...
...I CAN'T LEAVE THIS PLACE...
...I CAN'T ...I CAN'T...
...YOU HAVE NO CHOICE REGGIE...
...SORRY...
...GOODNIGHT...
THE LANDLORD LEFT... BUT EGGIE KNEW HE OULD HAVE TO OLLOW HIM...
... CAN'T LEAVE...
...STALK HIM LIKE A BLACK CAT IN THE ALLEY...
...REMOVE THE THREAT...
SSSSSSSSS
LLLL


...THAT AFTERNOON THEY BROUGHT THE WRECKING EQUIPMENT AND ERECTED A SMALL WORK SHACK IN THE PARK NEXT TO THE APARTMENT BLOCK...
...THEY SAT AROUND DURING AFTERNOON BREAK THROWING BEER CANS ON THE GRASS... REGGIE WATCHED, STIFLING MIXED EMOTIONS OF FEAR AND HATE...
...IN THE MORNING FOLLOWING, REGGIE STOOD BY THE FRONT DOOR OF THE EMPTY HOUSE... THEY DIDN'T KNOW HE STILL LIVED INSIDE... HE'D KEPT IT A SECRET...
...FOR A MOMENT...
...THEN DROP...
SSSSSSSSKKRATCH
SSKKKKOPHHH!
...THE AMBULANCES ARRIVED WITHIN 6 MINUTES TO SHOVEL UP THE DEAD... THE POLICE ARRIVED IN ONLY 3... THEY RAN INTO THE APARTMENT HOUSE SEARCHING FOR SOMEONE THEY NOW KNEW MUST STILL BE LIVING INSIDE...
...THEY FOUND REGGIE WHIMPERING IN THE CORNER... BESIDE HIM THE SKELETON OF HIS WIFE...
...27 YEARS IT LAY BURIED IN THE WALL... 27 YEARS REGGIE HAD BEEN HAPPY... UNTIL THE DAY THEY KNEW HE'D FIND IT... FIND THE VICTIM... FIND THE MURDEROR... HE HAD TO STOP THEM... KILL THE LANDLORD... CUT THE BALL CABLE SO IT WOULD DROP...
IT HAD DROPPED...
...SLICED THE WALL WIDE OPEN... EXPOSED THE SKELETON ANYWAY...
...BUT IF REGGIE HAD ONLY KNOWN...

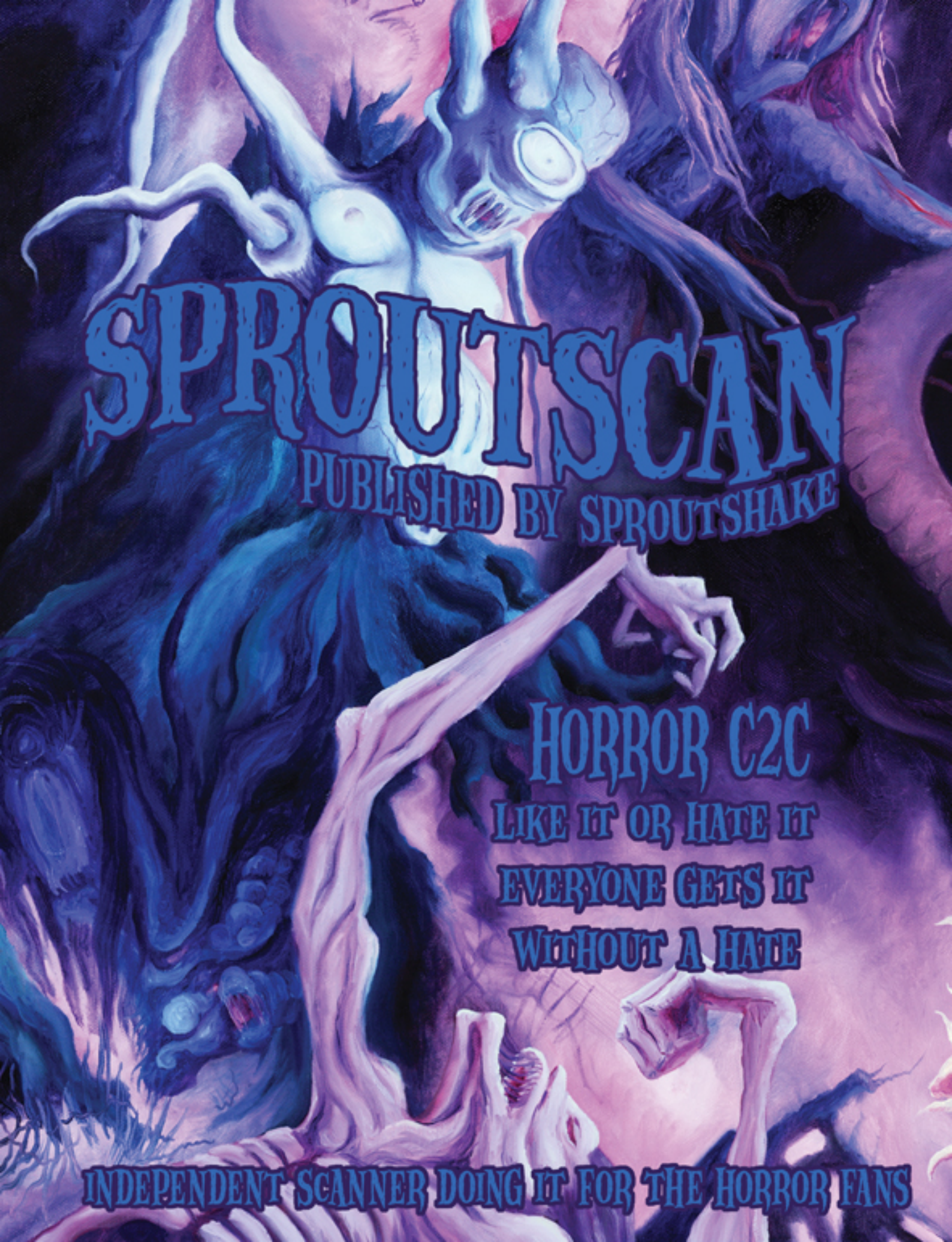
...IF REGGIE HAD ONLY KNOWN...

...IF HE'D ONLY SEEN THE OTHERS... THE COUNTLESS OTHER UNTRACEABLE SKELETONS THAT WERE IN THE WALLS THAT BAG OF FLEAS THAT HAD, OVER THE YEARS, ***COLLECTED***...

...HE WOULDN'T HAVE HAD TO BOTHER...

...THE SPLICED WALL LOOKED ALMOST AMUSING FROM THE STREET THAT DAY... THE OLD FLEA BAG OF AN APARTMENT BLOCK BARING ITS INNERMOST SECRETS... TELLING THE WORLD THAT THE PEOPLE WHO ONCE LIVED THERE WERE HUMAN... INTERESTING...ENTITIES...

...THE NEXT DAY THEY TORE IT DOWN...TURNED THE AREA INTO A PARKING LOT...


SPROUTSCAN
PUBLISHED BY SPROUTSHAKE
HORROR C2C
LIKE IT OR HATE IT
EVERYONE GETS IT
WITHOUT A HATE
INDEPENDENT SCANNER DOING IT FOR THE HORROR FANS